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RAYNSFORD PARK.

VOL. III

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# RAYNSFORD PARK,

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

Let such teach others who themselves excel,  
And censure freely who have written well.  
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true—  
But are not Critics to their judgment too?  
ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

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V O L. III.

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( 1 )

RAYNSFORD PARK.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO MISS RAYNSFORD.

Cornhill, October 14.

I WILL now, my dear Julia, give you the relation of an event occasioned by my escape from Mrs. Macaulay's, which has given me sincere pleasure, but which I hope will finally conclude my adventures. I never felt any ambition to be the heroine of a romance, and had I indulged such a wish, have suffered too much ever to repeat it. The third morning after my being sufficiently re-

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covered

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covered to quit my apartment, I was informed a young woman desired to speak with me: I ordered her to be admitted, and, to my inexpressible joy, saw it was no other than the very Miss Willis, to whose humanity I was so much indebted. I made an effort to rise, but my strength did not second my wishes; I could only express the satisfaction I felt by an exclamation, which instantly informed Lady Willoughby who it was. The poor girl's emotions were of a very different kind; conscious of her own situation, and awed I believe by the dignity of Lady Willoughby's look and manner, she stood at a distance, pale, trembling, and her eyes fixed on the ground; nor could her Ladyship's entreaties, added to mine, for some time prevail on her to sit down. She at last placing herself by me, said with a faltering voice, I fear, Miss Evelyn, I am come at an improper season; I was told  
you

you had been very ill, and your countenance too evidently shews it; but your letter, my distress—I must, interrupted I, be the most ungrateful of beings, could I ever consider you as an unwelcome visitor; I am overjoyed that my letter had the effect I wished, and you shall find that my gratitude is not confined to professions; that lady, pointing to my benefactress, will, I dare venture to affirm, impelled by her own benevolence, and by the friendship she honours me with, assist me in extricating you from a situation, into which I have no doubt you have been plunged by the villainy of some wretch of a similar character to him from whom you delivered me. Lady Willoughby, with that benignity which gives such an irresistible charm to her voice and countenance, assured Miss Willis she might depend upon her best services. The obligation you have laid



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on Miss Evelyn, said she, gives you a claim to the kindness of all her friends, and by my exertions for you, I will endeavour to evince the warmth of my attachment to her; open to me your whole heart without reserve. I am not, replied Miss Willis, after a pause, a stranger to Lady Willoughby's humanity, nor totally so to her person; I have more than once, Madam, had the honor of seeing you in Bond-street; the only return I can make to yours and Miss Evelyn's goodness, is by repenting of and confessing my past errors; this I am resolved to do most sincerely. The story I have to relate is a very common one; my father was a clergyman in the West of England; in his youth he had been tutor to several young men of fashion, and was at last rewarded by a living of two hundred a year; but this, though it enabled him to breed up his children decently, and give them toler-

able

able educations, did not, as he had a large family, allow of any thing to be laid by for our future support, and consequently at his death we were left entirely destitute. My brothers and sisters were taken by different relations, and I, then just entering my sixteenth year, was sent for to town by Mrs. Barker, a sister of my mother's, who keeps a large milliner's shop in Bond-street. My aunt was a good, though a very rigid woman; I lived happily with her for two years, and from being soon conversant in the business, became a favorite. Unfortunately for me, at that time a gentleman of the name of Leeson came to lodge in the neighbourhood; he saw and liked me, and by making an acquaintance with a young woman who had married from the shop, and whom I frequently visited, found means to meet me at her house. At first I believed his designs were honorable, but I blush

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to confess, that after I had reason to change my opinion, I still continued to meet him, led on by a vain foolish hope, that his attachment to me would at last bring him to the terms I wished. To this, and to the concealing the affair from my aunt, has been owing all the shame, guilt, and misery I have since suffered. Yet though I indulged my own inclinations and his, by meeting him at the house of my false friend, I solemnly aver I never permitted him to behave with the least impropriety. Wearied at last by my perseverance, and despairing of success, whilst I remained under my aunt's protection, he found means to decoy me to Mrs. Macaulay's, where, by the diabolical arts which are too frequently practised in those infamous houses, my ruin was completed; yet my principles were still uncorrupted, and after remaining there two days, I made my escape the third evening, and returned



turned to my aunt's; but I can never reflect without terror on the reception she gave me; without hearing what I had to say in my own defence, she loaded me with the most opprobrious epithets; and bidding me return to the place from whence I came, turned me into the streets at ten o'clock. The person where I used to meet Mr. Leeson was out of town, and I had not an acquaintance in London, but what was a friend of my aunt's, and of course prejudiced against me. Fearful of being seized by the watch, as a common prostitute, and drove to desperation by my aunt's unkindness, I returned to Charlotte-street: Mrs. Macaulay was overjoyed at seeing me, and sent immediately for Mr. Leeson; the transport he expressed, and the tenderness of his whole behaviour, contrasted with the insults I had lately been exposed to, made me forget my former injuries, and I consented to remain

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with him on his own terms. As Mr. Leeson was of a jealous disposition, he did not approve of placing me in private lodgings, where, when he was absent, I must have been left to my own guidance, but rather chose to pay the extravagant price Mrs. Macaulay demanded for my board, imagining by that, and by frequently making her valuable presents, he might depend on her fidelity. It is now a twelvemonth since my connection with him began; and though he has endeavoured to reconcile me to it by unabated fondness and liberality, I can truly say, during that time I have never known one happy moment. For some weeks I have determined to quit a way of life so repugnant to my feelings; and, as I saw no other method, was on the point of claiming protection at the Magdalen, when your letter, Miss Evelyn, opened to me a more pleasing prospect. I should  
have

have followed you the next day, but Mrs. Macaulay, from knowing my aversion to the way of life I was engaged in, I believe guessed the truth, and guarded me with such caution, that it was impossible for me, till this morning, to put my design in practice; but dreading lest Mr. Leeson's return should stagger my resolution, I watched my opportunity, and at last found means to elude her vigilance. And now, ladies, guilty, helpless, and destitute, I throw myself upon your mercy; my only wish is to be at a distance from London, in some place where I may be enabled to support myself by my own industry, and, by repentance and the regularity of my future conduct, to atone for my past errors. Before I could reply, Lady Willoughby assured her if she persisted in this design, she might depend on her protection; but, in the first place, said she, I will see what can be done with



your aunt; I know her very well, and have employed her several years, and she owes me some obligations, which will, I think, make her very unwilling to refuse any request of mine. I am going to pay a morning visit in St. James's-square, and shall take that opportunity of calling on her: as I must spend to-morrow at Richmond, I intend devoting this afternoon to Miss Evelyn: when I return I flatter myself with bringing you agreeable intelligence; but at all events make yourself easy; for should your aunt be inflexible, the rational and laudable wish you have formed shall be fully answered. My kind benefactress soon after left us to execute her humane design. When I was alone with Miss Willis, I asked her whether Mr. Evelyn or Mrs. Macaulay had discovered by what means I effected my escape. I believe, replied she, as I before told you, Mrs. Macaulay was convinced of my being accessory to it, but she

she kept this to herself, and from my remaining in the parlour, and sleeping in her apartment, no other person appeared to entertain the same idea: as to Betty, the girl who let you out, she managed with such dexterity, as entirely to avoid all suspicion: when you were gone, she went directly to the room where you slept, locked the door, and put the key in her pocket, first taking care to place a light in the chimney; she then rejoined her companions below, whom one of Mr. Evelyn's servants had fortunately treated with liquor. At two o'clock the family retired, all except myself, elevated, and most of them intoxicated by the manner in which the evening had been spent; but nothing could put Mr. Evelyn off his guard. I watched him from the upper staircase, and saw him before he went to his own room go to the door of yours, though, I believe, with no other design than to be assured that

all was safe: he softly tried the lock, and then looked through the key-hole, and seeing the light, he thought himself perfectly secure, and retired to his own chamber. As soon as all was quiet, Betty again stole down stairs, and going into a little dressing-room which joined your apartment, and looked into the street, she first softly lifted up the sash, then tying two sheets together, fastened one of them to a chair, and let the other down into the area, so that when your flight was discovered it was supposed you had effected it by getting out of the window. But it is in vain for me to attempt giving you an idea of Mr. Evelyn's rage, when first informed of your escape; it amounted to absolute frenzy: he imprecated curses on himself for not making better use of his time, when you were in his power, and vowed to take so ample a revenge on any one who had assisted you, that we thought ourselves extremely



tremely fortunate in having taken such precautions. I know Mr. Evelyn's vindictive disposition, said I, too well, not to tremble for the danger you were in; but tell me, my dear Miss Willis, why, instead of a scheme which might have ended fatally for us all, you did not take the more plain and obvious method of informing my friends of my situation? That I certainly should have done, she replied, had it been possible; but whilst you remained at Mrs. Macaulay's, no one of the family was allowed to go out on any pretence whatever, except Miss Bennet and Miss Webb, who, I am sorry to say, were on too good terms with Mr. Evelyn for him to fear any thing from them; but he had reason to believe my principles were not equally vitiated, and, dreading lest I or the servants should be induced to assist you, he took care this regulation should be strictly observed. One of his own men  
went

went on every necessary message and errand, and another was constantly placed as a centinel at the street door; and this fellow had not been off his post ten minutes when you left the parlour. Had Mr. Leeson been in town I should not have been thus confined; but in his absence I stood too much in awe of Mrs. Macaulay to refuse a request which she made in such a way that it amounted to a command, particularly as from my seldom or ever going out alone, my motive would have been suspected. Miss Willis then advised me not to venture abroad again for some time without the greatest precaution, as she was sure Mr. Evelyn was still in London, and, prompted by rage and revenge, would hazard every thing to get me in his power. Whilst we were conversing on this subject, Mrs. Ellison, who had been engaged the whole morning in business, entered the room. I informed her of every thing that had passed,

passed, and presented Miss Willis as my deliverer; she received her with the warmest affection, and assured her, though Lady Willoughby's protection made that of every other person unnecessary, she might both now and in future command her services to the utmost. When her Ladyship returned in the evening, she informed Miss Willis her success had answered her most sanguine expectations. Your aunt, said she, pardons and pities, though she does not at present wish to see you; and, as it would be improper for you to remain in London, she has engaged a person of the name of Smith, who keeps a milliner's shop at Nottingham, and of whom she speaks very highly, to receive you as an assistant. When Mrs. Barker mentioned this plan, and told me the person was then in town, and lodged in the next street, I begged she might be sent for; this was done, and in my presence they entered



entered into a mutual agreement. Mrs. Smith engaged to pay you a salary of twenty guineas for two years, and then to admit you into a share of the business, upon your aunt's promising to advance an hundred pounds for that purpose. Mrs. Smith leaves town tomorrow, and if you have no objection will call upon you here, and take you with her to the inn from whence the Nottingham stage sets out. It was with difficulty Miss Willis restrained her emotions whilst Lady Willoughby was speaking, but as soon as she had finished, threw herself on her knees, imploring a thousand blessings on her head, and thanking her repeatedly for her kindness to a creature, who had no claim to the protection of any of the virtuous of her own sex, much less for that of a lady equally distinguished by superior merit, and by exalted rank.

We

We were all affected by the artless earnestness of her manner; and Lady Willoughby raising her, assured her if she persisted in the paths of rectitude, she would not only obtain the forgiveness of Heaven, but be entitled to the countenance of all the really good and worthy. When she was a little composed, she begged to know if Mrs. Smith was acquainted with her story? Lady Willoughby replied, as she knew of your elopement; both your aunt and myself thought it better to inform her of every circumstance; and though she could not approve of your conduct, the pity she expressed for you, prepossessed me greatly in her favor. Miss Willis said from her own personal knowledge of Mrs. Smith, whom she had frequently seen, she was rather glad than sorry this explanation had been made. It is, added she, an humiliation I more than deserve for my past folly, and I shall be relieved from  
all

all fears of a future discovery. She would then again have expressed her gratitude to Lady Willoughby, Mrs. Ellison, and myself, but my good friend, fearing I might be fatigued with so long a conversation, begged she would accompany her down stairs. Lady Willoughby remained with me, and sending for Miss Willis before she went away, represented to her the happiness she would experience from persisting in a life of virtue, and the accumulated misery that must be her lot if she ever again listened to the allurements of vice, with such united force of reasoning, and captivating sweetness of manner, that the poor penitent girl affected, but not wounded by her admonitions, stood looking up to her as to a guardian Angel, the liveliest admiration and gratitude pictured in her countenance; and as soon as she ceased speaking, assured her that by the assistance of Heaven, the advice she had condescended to give, should



should ever be present to her mind. I should, said she, be the worst of wretches, were I capable of relapsing into a way of life, which I am convinced, by fatal experience, is equally productive of guilt and misery. Peculiarly favored as I have been by that Providence, who not only permitted me to escape the snare I was entangled in, but has raised me up friends in my own sex, who are an honor to human nature. Lady Willoughby took her hand, and told her what she had said did not proceed from a doubt of her sincerity, but a wish of strengthening her resolution; then slipping into it a ten pound bank note, and bidding her apply to her, or, if she was out of England, to Mrs. Granville, should she meet with any unforeseen difficulties in her new situation, left the room without waiting to receive her thanks. Letitia was indeed so overcome by this new instance of kindness, that for some minutes she could not speak

speaking at all, and when she did, it was only to express her gratitude in broken sentences. The next day was employed in making some preparations for her journey. When Mrs. Smith called in the evening, Mrs. Ellison prevailed on her to alight, as we both wished to recommend her new companion to her care and favor; she promised to do every thing in her power to make her easy, and to confirm the good purposes she had formed, and behaved with such propriety, that Miss Willis, though at first greatly shocked at the sight of one who had known her in her days of innocence, grew by degrees a little reassured, and when she parted from us, declared the anguish she visibly felt, exclusive of what arose from remorse, was entirely owing to her fears of never again seeing Lady Willoughby, Mrs. Ellison or myself. And now, my dear Julia, if this affair should terminate as I hope it will, in the reformation of this young

young creature; will it not be a proof of the truth of that maxim, that no evil except what is brought on by our own guilt, but is productive of superior good, either to ourselves or to some other being?

Long as this letter is, I cannot conclude it without clearing up a point which for some time puzzled me extremely; and this was, by what means Mr. Evelyn procured the assistance of Mrs. Granville's servant; but Lady Willoughby unfolded the enigma, by telling me that the day before I was carried off, the man had behaved so impertinently to her mother, that he was instantly discharged. I have no doubt but Mr. Evelyn was in town from the time Miss Herbert supposed he was gone to the Highlands; and, whilst misled by this idea, I visited Mrs. Ellison every day without caution, he certainly discovered where I resided, and bribed the fellow to assist his designs.



Lady Harrington left town this morning, with an intention of spending the winter in the country; she took an affectionate leave of me, and lamented that this circumstance, and our going abroad in February, would delay the intimacy which yet she hoped would subsist between Lady Willoughby's family and her's. I forgot to tell you Annette visited me frequently during my illness, and sat up with me twice; notwithstanding their attentions, and the more important service she had before rendered me, it was with the utmost difficulty I could prevail on her to accept a slight acknowledgment; but finding her refusal made me uneasy, she was at last prevailed on to receive a beautiful piece of callico I procured for that purpose, to which Mrs. Ellison insisted on adding a suit of fine muslin.

As I flatter myself you will keep to the day you have fixed on, this will probably

bably be the last letter you will have from me. Lady Willoughby returns to town to-morrow, and I shall leave Mrs. Ellison the next morning. Her ladyship begs you and Sir William will spend the day of your arrival in Portland Place, as she wishes to be introduced to you as soon as possible; and on this condition promises I shall be your guest whilst you remain in town. Much as I wish to embrace you, I almost dread seeing your father; I fear you have represented me to him in far too favorable a light, and that, disappointed in his expectations, he will discover a thousand imperfections, though your partiality cannot allow you to see one, in your faithful

HARRIET EVELYN.

LETTER

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LETTER XXXVIII.

TO THE HON. MISS HAMILTON.

Montague Abbey; Oct. 3.

IT may, my dear Miss Hamilton, appear paradoxical, but we certainly often neglect complying with the commands of our best friends, in order to obey them in a fuller extent: as an instance in point, you desired me, on my arrival in Wales, to give you my real opinion of your cousin's state of mind, and way of life; instead of which, almost a month is elapsed, without your receiving a line from me: but the truth is, I thought the more  
I saw



I saw of Hamilton in his retirement, the better able I should be to send you the requested intelligence, and therefore delayed writing till my visit was concluded. But I know you will forgive me, and the reader, as I have the satisfaction of assuring you that I found and left my friend much happier than I expected, considering the fervency of his attachment to Miss Raynsford. Young as he is, he has so long accustomed his passions to submit to the dictates of reason and religion, that he every day obtains a greater command over them: both his mind and countenance are, generally, speaking calm and placid, though the momentary gloom which sometimes overspreads the latter, evinces his heart is not entirely free from painful sensations; but to avoid reflection, which he considers as his worst enemy, he keeps himself constantly employed and amused; and the exercise he uses in consequence of this resolution, will I

hope re-establish his health, which has been visibly injured by the struggles of his mind. Mrs. Hamilton is really an amiable woman, mild, artless and unassuming, but neither insipid in conversation, nor unpolished in manner; nothing can be more tender and animated than her affection for her husband; yet while she hangs upon his looks and words, and lives but in his sight, her love is so perfectly delicate and unobtrusive, and principally shewn in an unremitted desire to please, that it not only entitles her to the esteem of all his friends, but has the happy effect of encreasing every hour his attachment to her. Their humble dwelling, though literally a cottage, is ornamented with the utmost taste and neatness; and the country round it must in spring and summer be uncommonly picturesque and beautiful. Their income is very limited, but Hamilton declares it is more than sufficient for their wishes; nor could I, by

I, by every possible argument, prevail on him to accept the least addition to it. Notwithstanding what I have said, I am entirely of your opinion, that the talents and merit he possesses, ought not to be buried in obscurity. I hinted this to him more than once, but without effect, and am therefore determined not to oppose him for a year or two; by that time his mind will, I hope, have recovered its former strength, and his natural love for society make him wish to return to it. We will then, my dear Miss Hamilton, exert all our own power, and that of every one over whom we have the least influence, to fix him in a less improper situation, either by promotion in the army, if Mrs. Hamilton, who turns pale at the mention of war, does not oppose it, or by procuring him some honorable and lucrative civil employment. You know not how much I honor, how much I love you for the anxiety you feel for the



the welfare of my friend, and the more so, as I know it is perfectly disinterested. Colonel Douglas reigns too unrivalled in your bosom, for any other of his sex to hope any thing from you but esteem; sensible as I am of your attractions, but for this, and one other motive, I should long since have laid my heart at your feet; yet it has received such a deep and hopeless wound from a pair of blue eyes, which, like your own, beam with the intelligence they derive from one of the noblest and purest of female minds, that it would not be worth your acceptance. I propose leaving the Abbey to-morrow, and shall embark as soon as possible for Leghorn. To give you my route in a few words, I intend spending my winter at Rome, the spring and summer in excursions to different parts of Italy, and re-visiting Florence in the autumn. I shall then determine whether it will be best to return to my native country,

or

or extend my tour to the Courts of Vienna and Petersburg. Yet at all events I shall probably pay a short visit to England, and try if Hamilton can be drawn from his retirement. Remember me affectionately to your brother; be assured no time or distance can weaken the esteem I feel for you both, and that I am particularly

Your ever devoted

WILLIAM MONTAGUE.

## LETTER XXXIX.

TO MISS VERNON.

Charlotte-street, Nov. 17.

THOUGH I wish your Cousin all possible happiness, I have not ceased regretting that by fixing her wedding just at this time, she obliged you to take a journey into Cornwall, instead of accompanying me to town. You, my dear Charlotte; have been the companion and soother of my heaviest hours, and I am sincerely concerned that you cannot personally partake of the pleasant ones



ones I now spend in the society of those, who, from what I know of your taste, are particularly adapted to please you. I am indeed happier than I have been for many months past, and, could I banish one idea, should be entirely so; but, surrounded as I am with motives for thankfulness, ought I to repine that every wish of my heart has not been granted? ought I, by giving way to unavailing melancholy, tacitly to reproach that Providence, who has liberally bestowed upon me all the blessings, friendship, health, youth and affluence can give? You would, I am sure, have been delighted to have seen the meeting between me and my beloved friend; she is, I think, if possible, improved both in mind and person; but when I first saw her, I was pained by remarking the languor her late illness had left in her countenance; but the lustre of her eyes, and the bloom on her cheeks begin

again to return, and I flatter myself change of climate will entirely restore her health. As to Lady Willoughby, highly as my imagination was raised, both by Lady Anne Lloyd and Harriet, she far exceeds every idea I had formed; her understanding is of the most exalted kind, and has been improved both by reading and observation; yet her condescension is such, that though capable by quickness of perception, and elegance of expression, to explain and throw light on the sublimest subjects, she never oppresses the weakest capacity by her superiority, but, accommodating herself without effort to their level, will converse with ease and fluency on the most trifling. Her penetration, judgment and refinement are universally acknowledged, and have made her the arbitress of taste in every polite circle; yet these brilliant qualities, which, if unaccompanied by still more estimable ones, would

would only excite cold admiration, are in her so blended with real benignity of mind and sweetness of disposition, that she appears to possess the affection as well as esteem of all who know her, excepting those only, who, to borrow a few words from the enchanting authoress of Cecilia, "Are the enemies of envy, not of resentment; enemies raised by superior merit, not excited by injury or provocation." Lord Willoughby arrived in town but a few days before us; from all I have seen, and what I have heard of his character, he deserves the blessing he possesses in this first of women, and that is saying every thing in one. My father, delighted with both, and charmed with Harriet, has engaged not only to remain in town till they leave it, but to revisit it every winter, on condition of their spending some time at Raynsford Park when they return from abroad, and of honoring it with their



presence as often as possible. My own satisfaction is inexpressibly heightened by observing every day an encreasing tranquillity in his mind and countenance; a tranquillity which I feared the death of my unfortunate brother had totally destroyed. I have not yet visited any public place, as I have an aversion to bearing

“ About the mockery of woe,  
“ To midnight dances, and the public shew.”

But I intend the last month of our residence here, to accompany Lady Willoughby and Harriet to the play, opera, &c. yet, believe me, we stand in no need of amusement. We almost live in Portland Place, or, when Lady Willoughby is unavoidably engaged, spend our evenings in some very agreeable circles, with whom my father has renewed his former acquaintance, and by whom I am received with the most flattering distinction.

tion. Though whilst under Mrs. Irvine's care I was frequently with my late aunt in town, yet from her constant ill health, and unwillingness ever to part with me, every thing in London has the charm of novelty, and I take even a childish pleasure in visiting the public buildings, and in driving about the streets and environs of this vast metropolis. In these excursions I often call on Mrs. Ellison, whose kindness to Harriet entitles her to the attention of all her other friends. As you know the story of Miss Willis, I am sure you will be pleased when I tell you Lady Willoughby received a letter from her yesterday, in which, after the warmest expressions of gratitude, she says Mrs. Smith's behaviour gives her every reason to imagine she shall be happier than, considering her past conduct, she had any reason to expect. I recollect, my dear Charlotte, when we parted, you

told me the society I should meet with in London, would banish you from my remembrance, but I am sure your own mind is too liberal to imagine such a change possible in mine. Gay says,

“ Friendship, like love, is but a name,  
“ Unless to one we stint the flame.”

But I know from experience, there is no truth in this maxim. I have long loved you and Harriet with the truest affection, and I am certain the lively regard I already feel for Lady Willoughby, will contradict another generally received opinion, that sudden attachments are never lasting. I am, however, willing to allow that friendship ought to be founded on gratitude, long acquaintance, or on some uncommonly estimable qualities of the heart or understanding, the reality of which, instead of depending on fancy, must be confirmed by judgment, on the evidence of incontrovertible facts; and,  
excited



excited by such motives, I will venture to affirm, that whether slowly or suddenly formed, it will stand the test of time, distance, or any alteration of circumstances. As to those light people, who, neglecting their old connections, are continually in pursuit of new ones, and who, impelled by vanity, caprice, or dazzled by mere external advantages, call every agreeable acquaintance by the respectable name of friend, it is as unfair to draw any conclusion from their conduct, as it would be to affirm there is no such thing as love, because a thousand male and female coquettes can assume the appearance, without feeling the reality of that passion; or, if I may be allowed a more serious comparison, to say that religion has no real existence, because its sacred laws are profaned by hypocrisy, or unintentionally injured by enthusiasm. Interested as I am in the subject, I know not whether I have ex-

pressed myself with clearness ; but if you are convinced by what I have said, that I can love all who deserve my esteem, I have gained the point I aim at, as you must be sensible I am bound to you by every tie of gratitude and affection. The Egerton family dined with us yesterday ; Caroline, as usual, all gaiety and good humour, and her brother so attentive to Harriet, that I fancy your cruelty has at last enabled him to break his chains ; but you will not regret the loss of an hundred captives like him, whilst their place is so well supplied by Edmund Ardley. Ah, Charlotte ! you are a happy girl, your tenderness has the sanction of your father's avowed approbation, and, free from those mortifying reflections which will ever degrade me in my own opinion, you can say to yourself with conscious pride, that your regard for Mr. Ardley was excited by a knowledge of his preference for you ;—

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but I must not touch this string, it vibrates too painfully on my heart; and lest I should be tempted to give way to a train of melancholy ideas, I will conclude with requesting you to believe

I am ever faithfully yours,

JULIA RAYNSFORD.

LETTER



40 RAYNSFORD PARK.

BETTER XL.

TO MISS HERBERT.

Portland Place, Dec. 22.

**H**OW little dependance, my dear Miss Herbert, can we place on any pleasure in this transitory world; yet, though the vain and presumptuous may from this impiously arraign the dispensations of that Power, of whose ways they are totally ignorant, I am convinced this evil, like every other, is graciously designed by the Supreme Being for the ultimate benefit of his creatures. It is not the want

want of blessings, but their precariousness, by which we are taught to view this world in a proper light; and, I believe, there are few who would wish to exchange it for a better, were they permitted to return to some favourite period of their lives, and certain of retaining for ever the felicity they then possessed. The refined transports the most unfortunate at some times experience, from the exertions of benevolence, the emotions of friendship, gratitude, or natural affection, from tracing the goodness and wisdom of the Creator in his works, and even from the effects of sound and harmony, may convince them the soul is capable of exalted happiness, and teach them to look forward to that state, where this happiness will not only be more exquisite and enlarged than they can form any idea of, but permanent and unchangeable. These reflections will enable the most unhappy not to sink under  
their

their afflictions, and the fortunate to avoid the still greater danger of prosperity, by instructing them not to suffer temporal blessings to pervert their principles, lest, by grasping at comparatively the shadow of happiness, they should for ever forfeit the reality.

You will think I am uncommonly serious, nor can you wonder at it if by any means informed of the event that has lately happened in Charlotte-street; an event by which all the happiness I experienced in the society of my friend is over-clouded, and the hope I have indulged of seeing her restored to tranquillity before I left England totally destroyed. I told you in my last Sir William and Miss Raynsford were to be in town next day. I found the latter retained all that generosity of sentiment and nobleness of conduct which marks her character; and that she had acquired  
a spirit



a spirit of calmness and resignation which, considering the warmth and vivacity of her disposition, I thought she never would have possessed. I had soon the pleasure of observing a mutual attachment subsist between her and Lady Willoughby, and that our endeavours to amuse her, and to dissipate that melancholy, which her brother's death, and some other unpleasant circumstances left upon her mind, had the desired effect. Sir William himself grew every day more cheerful, and appeared to have lost his regret for his son, in affection for a daughter, who deserved and returned his tenderness by the most unremitting attentions. He seemed delighted with all Lord Willoughby's family, and his behaviour to me was such, that I regarded him even with filial affection. By reflection, and making a proper use of the evils of life, he had subdued, in a great measure, that harshness of expression and sternness.

sternness of manner which till very lately rendered him more the object of fear than of love to his best friends: all that remained of his former character was the asperity with which in general satire he often lashed the vices and follies of mankind. The contrast between him and Lord Willoughby was a perpetual source of amusement to us all: his Lordship is one of the most benevolent of beings; his excessive fondness for study has not soured his disposition, nor rendered him in the least degree absent or abstracted; he has an universal knowledge of men and manners, as well as of books, but the innate benignity of his disposition inclines him to look on every event and action in the most favourable point of view. This was by no means the case with Sir William, and, of course, they often dissented; but their arguments were always carried on with the utmost good humour, sometimes with great force of

of reasoning, and often with a playful fort of pleasantry. Lord Willoughby's wit is of the brilliant, Sir William's was more of the caustic kind; but they never said any thing on either side to give the slightest offence, or alarm us with an apprehension of their really disagreeing: never, I believe; were two families more happy in the society of each other. In these pleasant domestic parties, visiting a variety of agreeable people, and seeing every thing worthy of observation in and round London, two months past without any of us being sensible half that time was elapsed. Julia had now changed her mourning, and, to vary the scene, we intended, as soon as the holidays were over, accompanying Lady Willoughby to the public amusements, when, about ten days since, Sir William told us we must all turn nurses, as from his hands being very much swelled, he feared he should have a regular fit of the gout.



gout. Julia, who imagined this might be of essential service to his health, earnestly begged him to avoid the cold, but he disregarded her entreaties, and was that very morning caught in the Park in a violent shower of rain; this struck the disorder to his stomach, and in less than four-and-twenty hours he expired in extreme agonies. Notwithstanding his sufferings, he prepared for death as became a man and a christian: after taking an affectionate leave of Julia, whom no persuasions could induce to quit the apartment, he told her that she would find by his will, which he begged might be opened as soon as possible after his decease, that he had the highest opinion of her integrity and prudence; but, added he, the world will think you too young to be left to your own guidance, I wish, therefore, you would request your aunt, to whom I have made all the atonement in my power for my former unkindness,

to

to live with you whilst you remain unmarried. These, and a few other words relative to an affair which I am not at liberty to mention, were the last he ever spoke, except the devotions which he offered to Heaven with the utmost fervency. It was with difficulty we prevailed on Julia to quit the corpse of her beloved father; nor would she consent to leave the house, till it was taken away to be deposited in the family vault. Sir William, a few hours before his death, ordered an express to be dispatched to his two most intimate friends, Mr. Vernon and Mr. Ardley, who both live in the neighbourhood of Raynsford Park. As soon as they arrived, the will was opened. After leaving annuities to his servants, some legacies to particular friends, a very considerable one to his sister, whom he never till very lately forgave for marrying without his approbation, and ten thousand pounds in charity,

rity, four to the Magdalen and Foundling Hospitals, and the interest of the other six, to people who; after living in decent circumstances, had been reduced by unavoidable misfortunes, he bequeathed the whole remainder of his fortune, both real and personal, to Miss Raynsford, the latter without any restrictions, but the former is to go to the heir at law, should she die unmarried. He has appointed Mr. Ardley and Mr. Vernon his executors, and her guardians, but with a request, that if they are called to this last-mentioned office before she is of age, they would suffer her to be in every respect her own mistress. The grief of Julia has been considerably augmented by this uncommon proof of her father's confidence, nor does she appear to receive the least consolation from the very large fortune of which his affection has put in her possession. Mr. Vernon assured Lord Willoughby, that after every demand



demand was paid, it would amount to three thousand a year, landed property, and upwards of thirty thousand pounds in the funds. This is a noble independance, nor do I know any woman who will make a better use of it than Julia; she has a liberal, I might say a magnificent spirit, and a heart feelingly alive to the distresses of her fellow-creatures; her designs in my favour, which I discovered by accident, are far more generous than I will ever consent to. I have, however, promised that I will one day accept from her an independance, which however scanty it may appear in her eyes, I shall consider as affluence. In consequence of her earnest solicitation, Lady Willoughby has promised that when we return to England, I shall divide my time equally between them; her Ladyship, when we were alone, kindly told me this would be a painful sacrifice; but as Miss Raynsford had a prior right

to my friendship, she could not refuse it; yet though she acknowledged this right, she was certain no one could love me with greater tenderness, or be more sensible of my merit than herself. This best and most amiable of women has offered to postpone her journey to the Continent, till my friend's mind is in a more composed state; but Julia declined this, from a conviction that as every thing was arranged, a delay now would be inconvenient both to her and Lord Willoughby; and, as we do not set out till the seventh, I flatter myself she may before that time regain some degree of tranquillity. If we stay abroad longer than a twelvemonth, she has promised to join our party, and this is a proof notwithstanding her present dejection, she can look forward with hope and comfort. Her present design is to spend the intermediate time between Bath and Raynsford Park; to the former of these she

is going, as soon as she quits London, by the advice of Dr. L——, and as her aunt, who is, I am told, a very amiable woman, will be her constant companion, I think I ought not to make myself uneasy at the thoughts of leaving her. Will you, my dear Sophia, give the enclosed to Mrs. Evelyn, and from time to time continue your intelligence relative to her unworthy husband. Farewel,

And believe me ever yours,

H. EVELYN.



## LETTER XLI.

TO MISS VERNON.

Portland Place, Jan. 29.

**H**ow different, my dear Charlotte, are the painful emotions I now feel, from those lively ideas which engaged my mind when I wrote last; but this and every other melancholy retrospection ought to be avoided, since they only serve to keep alive that excessive grief I am determined, if possible, to overcome; resignation to the will of Providence,

dence, gratitude to those valuable friends who so kindly interest themselves in my welfare, conspire to claim this exertion, and I have been already enabled to make it in a degree surprising to myself. Yet my loss is an irreparable one, and was at first aggravated by the reflection, that my dear father was taken from the world just as he began to be sensible of its blessings; but this was a vain and almost an impious thought; have I not every reason to hope he is raised to a life of happiness, ten thousand times greater than any this imperfect state can bestow? I always loved and respected him, though there was a time when his death would not have affected me so deeply; but his behaviour to me, for many months past, and the kind attention with which he soothed my mind, when labouring under a distress that would have excited resentment, instead

54 RAYNSFORD PARK.

of pity in most parents, rendered him equally the object of affection and of duty; nor do I think I suffered more when separated from the best of mothers; but though my affliction is as sincere, and has been as poignant, I hope my conduct will be very different; I then thought it right to indulge emotions, which I now consider it as my duty to subdue, and by giving way to all the luxury of grief, and recalling every idea that could encrease it, I weakened my spirits and impaired my constitution. My sorrow was the more lasting for being confined to my own bosom, for though my thoughts dwelt perpetually on the mother I had lost, I could not speak of her nor hear her mentioned without the most violent emotions. Miss Evelyn was the first who pointed out to me the error I was guilty of, and to her example and gentle admonitions, I am indebted, not only



only for the strength of mind I acquired at that time, but for being enabled to bear with some degree of fortitude, the evils I have since experienced. On the last trying occasion, both Lady Willoughby and Harriet have endeavoured to alleviate my distress by the tenderest sympathy of friendship, and by imperceptibly leading my thoughts from the present to the future; nor will I be ungrateful for these kind attentions; my heart must long retain the sadness and regret which now fills it; but I will use every exertion to prevent it from sinking into the fullen dejection; or giving way to the excessive transports of grief. There is one pleasure which my dear father has amply put it into my power to indulge, that of relieving the distresses of my fellow creatures, and I hope I shall not misapply the sacred trust he reposed in me. A few minutes before

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his.

his death he told me, I should be surprised at the opening of the will, to find no mention made of Hamilton. Yet, added he, except yourself, there is no human being I equally love and esteem. For many years I fondly indulged the idea of one day seeing you united to each other, nor, extraordinary as some parts of his behaviour appeared to me, did I give up that hope, till informed he was actually married. At that moment rage and disappointment got the better of all my former regard, and I solemnly swore, not only to destroy the will in which I had left him a considerable legacy, but never to mention him in another. The vow had scarcely past my lips before I repented the rashness and precipitation with which I had made it, but it could not be recalled; his letter, which I received a few days afterwards, convinced me I had unjustly accused

cused him, and added to my regret. All the reparation I can now make for the injustice I have been guilty of, is by recommending him to you. I do not, for many reasons, with the renewal of your acquaintance, but I request you to settle five thousand pounds upon him as soon as you are of age; this sum will extricate him from the difficulties in which I fear his imprudent marriage may have involved him, and enable him to obtain that rank in the army he so well deserves to fill. How earnestly, my dear Charlotte, do I wish for the arrival of that time which will put it in my power to obey this injunction, nor would I wait thirteen months, were I not fearful my guardians might imagine I intended to shelter my own wish of assisting Hamilton, under the sanction of my father; but as every thing in this life is uncertain,

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## 58 RAYNSFORD PARK.

tain, I have informed my aunt, who has been in London some days, of the whole affair, and exacted from her a promise that if I die before I am of age, as my whole personal fortune must center in her, she will obey my father's commands in this particular. From what I have seen, and every thing I have heard of this excellent woman, I have no doubt of her integrity; she has been for many years tutored in the best of schools, and has well improved from the lessons she learnt in it. Lord and Lady Willoughby have kindly offered to put off their journey for a month or six weeks, but I would not consent to this flattering mark of attention, and they are therefore resolved to set out for Dover the seventh of February; on the same day I propose returning to Raynsford Park, accompanied by my aunt, who

who has promised to live with me entirely. I shall remain only a few days in Devonshire, as I wish to try the effects of the Bath waters, which have been prescribed to me by Dr. L. The sorrow I feel at the idea of leaving my beloved friends here, would be lessened were you at Vernon Place; but indeed, my dear, your cousin's illness, as well as marriage, has been a source of real regret to me. Had you accompanied me to town, the fatal event, which I must ever lament, might not have happened. You had in some points an uncommon degree of influence over my father, and might have prevailed on him to use those precautions, to the neglect of which his death was certainly owing. But these reflections are weak and unavailing; do not tell Mrs. Trevillian what I have said, she does not know me, and I

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cannot

60 RAYNSFORD PARK.

cannot expect from her those allowances you ever make for the petulance of

Your affectionate

JULIA RAYNSFORD.

LETTER



LETTER XLII.

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LETTER XLII.

TO MISS RAYNSFORD.

Calais, February 10.

I SNATCH a moment, whilst the carriages are getting ready, to inform my dear Julia, that her friends are safely landed at Calais; but from the pain we felt at parting with you, both our journey and voyage would have been as pleasant as they were safe. I will write to you again the instant we arrive at Paris. Lord and Lady

62 RAYNSFORD PARK.

Willoughby join in every affectionate remembrance, with your ever faithful

HARRIET. EVELYN.

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

63

LETTER XLIII.

TO MISS RAYNSFORD.

Paris, February 12.

HOW much, my dear Julia, do I regret that you could not be persuaded to accompany those friends, who would have considered your society as an addition to every pleasure this excursion may be productive of. The entire change of scene, by amusing your mind, must have restored your cheerfulness; and I can answer, that both Lady Willoughby



loughby and myself, would have omitted no attention that could have flattered us with the hope of accelerating so desirable an event; yet the reasons you gave for remaining in England were such, that I cannot condemn, though I lament a determination which has again separated us for twelve tedious months. At the end of that time, if we do not return to England, we depend upon your promise of joining our party. Lord Willoughby intends staying at Paris only a month; we are then to set out for Florence, where we shall probably remain till the end of autumn; whether we shall then re-visit this place, or spend the winter in Naples, is yet undetermined; but Lady Willoughby is so fond of her mother, that I do not think she will bear to be absent from her more than a year. I may, my dear Julia, some time hence, give myself the airs  
of

of a travelled Lady; at present I have little right to the title, and must not, therefore, attempt to assume the distinction it gives; and after all, I fear you will not find my letters much improved. It has been for some years so much the fashion to write letters from France and Italy, that nothing new can be said upon the subject, I mean as to the manners, customs, and appearance of the inhabitants, or the description of their cities and villages; yet as Lord Willoughby who spent many years on the Continent before his marriage, has an universal acquaintance among the first people, I may be enabled to give you an account of a variety of Princes and Princesses, to whom he will introduce us; and following the example of a late amiable female writer, give you a particular account of their palaces, pictures, entertainments, &c. yet, believe me,

I do

I do not mean to throw an illiberal reflection on this *Lady*; her only foible was so overbalanced by a thousand virtues, that I am almost angry with myself for this implied sarcasm. From the little I have yet seen of Paris, I am excessively pleased with it; but Lord Willoughby's description of Italy makes me impatient to begin our journey to a country, where my fondness for music and painting will be gratified in the highest degree. I shall impatiently expect a letter from you, and hope it will contain an account of your amended health and spirits; till I receive this intelligence, I cannot partake with real satisfaction of any amusement or pleasure: but you will, you must be well; and, convinced, as you are, of the consequence your welfare is to those friends whom I am sure you love and esteem, you will make use of every means to recover your cheerfulness. I shall direct  
this,



this to Raynsford Park, from whence it may be forwarded to Bath. I flatter myself Miss Vernon will soon have it in her power to attend you there; this and the certainty of your aunt's paying you every attention, lessens that uneasiness which yet at times I cannot help feeling on your account. My mind continually adverts to you, and I almost reproach myself for leaving you at such a time; yet without ingratitude to Lady Willoughby, I could not act otherwise. You I know, will not condemn me, nor imagine my attachment to her, warm and lively as it is, can lessen the affection with which I am ever your's,

HARRIET EVELYN.

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

TO MISS EVELYN.

Cirencester, Bath, February 25.

**T**HE account of your safe arrival at Calais, as well as your letter from Paris, gave my heart a sensation of pleasure it had not before experienced since our separation; yet, believe me, my dear Harriet, I every day make some progress in the arduous task of subduing that grief, which you have convinced me, on this and on former occasions, I ought not to indulge.

For

For this reason I staid only five days at Raynsford Park, where every object reminded me of the loss I had sustained. Had Miss Vernon been in Devonshire, I should probably have remained there some time longer; but though my aunt is a truly good and amiable woman, her spirits have been so weakened by that worst of all calamities, a worthless and unkind husband, for whose sake she sacrificed the affection and esteem of all her family, that her conversation is not calculated to raise mine. You will be convinced of this when I tell you, that much as I dreaded returning home, my emotions were slight in comparison with hers. During the last twenty miles of our journey, she grew every instant more dejected, and when we came in sight of the house, no longer able to suppress her feelings, she burst into a violent agony of tears, and, passionately wringing her hands, exclaimed,



exclaimed, oh, Julia, I ought not to add to the distress which is visible in your countenance, but believe me, the sorrow you feel, unimbittered as it is by remorse and self reproach, is happiness to what I experience at this moment. At the age of sixteen, attending only to the violence of passion, I clandestinely eloped from that spot, quitted the most indulgent of parents and the kindest of brothers, who from the difference of our age, I was taught to consider as a second father, to throw myself into the arms of a man whom I scarcely knew any thing of, but that he had a fine person and engaging manner, and who, I was soon convinced, saw no attractions in me, but what arose from the hope of my one day bringing him an ample fortune. Labouring under the idea that my mother's death was hastened by this act of disobedience, the continual displeasure of my father and brother, and the

## LETTER XLIV.

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the unkindness of a husband, who, disappointed in the scheme he had formed of aggrandizing himself by an alliance with my family, frequently upbraided me with the very fault to which he had seduced me, I dragged for almost thirty years a life of complicated wretchedness. Whilst Mr. Davenport lived, my misery was aggravated by the affection, which neither his cruelty nor profligacy could entirely eradicate from my bosom. Yet, notwithstanding this ill returned tenderness, his death would have been a relief to me, particularly as it was productive of my brother's forgiveness, had not the shocking and sudden manner in which he was called from the world, with all his sins upon his head, left a terror upon my mind, which, together with my own remorse, will make me a very unfit companion for you. Could the thoughtless and inexperienced but have witnessed the  
thousandth

thousandth part of the evils I have suffered from one act of disobedience, how cautiously, unless totally lost to reflection, would they avoid forming any connection inconsistent with their duty; how sincerely tread even the idea of placing their affections on a man void of principle and virtue. There was in my aunt's look and manner as she pronounced these words, so striking a resemblance of my father, that I could not help being inexpressibly affected; but concealing my own grief, lest it should encrease her's, I endeavoured by every possible method to soothe her disturbed mind; her regard for me made her assume an appearance of tranquillity, and our mutual fear of giving pain, make us act under a kind of friendly disguise; but I soon found the solitude which reigned in Raynsford Park, from the absence of most of the neighbouring families,



families, was by no means proper for either of us; and as soon as I had finished some necessary business with Mr. Vernon, I hastened to Bath, where a house had been previously taken for us in the Circus, by Lady Anne Lloyd. If this place answers the expectation I have already formed of it, I intend remaining here till May, and have then promised to pay a visit to Lady Anne Lloyd, at Mortimer Castle, in Denbighshire. I know you will be pleased with this plan, as well as with my determination, that, excepting public places, I will enter into every engagement, and catch at every amusement that may serve to dissipate my mind. I have already received visits from many families of my acquaintance who, fortunately for me, are at present here; among these, there are some for whom I have a real esteem, particularly the Lloyds, Mrs. and Miss

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Egerton,

Egerton, and the Ardleys; Edmund Ardley is my shadow, and from his unvarying assiduities, the world will, I doubt not, soon give him to me as a lover, perhaps a favored one: alas! how little do they know of the hearts of either. His younger brother, a good natured, thoughtless lad, is going to Paris, and has promised to give this into your own hands; but as he does not set out for two or three days, I shall probably add to it, though nothing of consequence can, I think, occur in that time.

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February the 27th.

Notwithstanding what I said in the above paragraph, I have, my dear Julia,  
met

met with an adventure, which to me, at least, appears worthy your attention. I am half afraid both you and my beloved Lady Willoughby will condemn the part I have acted in it; yet, conscious of my own right intention, and convinced of your candor, I know, upon examination, you will acquit me of imprudence. My aunt was so much indisposed yesterday, that, unwilling to leave her, I declined going to a party from which I had promised myself some amusement; but I was well repaid for this trifling sacrifice, by a visit from Miss Egerton, who dropped in upon me in the afternoon, and finding I was disengaged, told me she would stay with me till nine o'clock, when she was obliged to be at a private concert in Catherine Place. After we had conversed a few minutes on general subjects, Can you, Miss Raynsford, said she, possibly guess what



induced me to call on you at this unusual hour? No, replied I, unless, as I flatter myself, it was the wish of seeing me. That, answered she, I always feel, but I confess it was not my sole motive; I could not be easy till I had told you, I had last night the happiness of being in company with a man, who, taking him “for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again;” nor will you disbelieve me, when I tell you, it was the Mr. Hamilton of whom I heard so much when I was last autumn at Mr. Ardley’s. Fortunately for me, Caroline’s eyes were employed in adjusting some part of her dress, or the too visible alteration in my countenance could not have escaped her observation; but availing myself of this circumstance, I assumed an appearance of ease, and asked, though not I fear without hesitation, if Mrs. Hamilton was with him, and whether

ther they intended remaining long at Bath? I will, said she, inform you of every thing I know, if you will permit me to be circumstantial; for, like Sancho Pancha, I must tell my story my own way. You may remember I told you yesterday at the Pump Room, that notwithstanding my insuperable aversion to routs, I feared I should be obliged to go with my mother that evening to one she was engaged to at Lady Saville's. I endeavoured to persuade her to excuse me, as I had a much pleasanter engagement in view; but she continued inflexible, and I was forced to acquiesce. To those who never play, card parties are the most insipid things in the world; before the evening was half over, I grew so tired, that I wickedly repented my obedience, when it was unexpectedly rewarded by the entrance of the man, whom, of all others,

I had the greatest curiosity to see. I guessed it was him the instant I heard his name; his person, countenance, address, and manner, convinced me I could not be mistaken. Sir John and Lady Saville received him with great politeness, and, as he declined playing; the former, when his rubber was over, gave up his cards to a young lady, and introduced him to me, who ever since his appearance had been considering how to attract his attention, as one of his particular friends. We soon fell into an easy chat on the new buildings, company, &c. in the course of which I asked Sir John if you had yet returned Lady Saville's visit. I have, my dear, been told, and from very good authority, that Mr. Hamilton was once your passionate admirer, and, however attached he may be at present to his wife, I am confident he is still tenderly interested



ested in every thing relative to you. At the mention of your name, he started, turned pale, and enquired, with evident agitation, if I meant Miss Raynsford of Devonshire; and added, he hoped it was not indisposition that had brought you to Bath. I answered his first question, and, willing to relieve his anxiety, assured him, though you had been very ill since the death of Sir William, the benefit you already found from the waters, gave your friends reason to flatter themselves you would soon be perfectly recovered. From my knowledge, said he, of Miss Raynsford's sensibility and disposition, I feared the late severe and unexpected stroke would be too much for her spirits and constitution: he then spoke in the highest terms of you and Sir William, and declared he should ever consider the esteem you had both honored him with, as one of the great

est pleasures and first distinctions of his life. I was so charmed with the warmth of his manner, and the elegance of his language, that I could have listened to him a whole day without interruption; and, when he had done speaking, I told him I was rejoiced I had been the accidental means of informing him you were at Bath, as I doubted not but he would take an early opportunity of waiting on you in the Circus; where, from my knowledge of the sincere regard you felt for all your friends, and the particular attention you paid those who were favorites of your father, I was sure he would be a welcome visitor. At these words his countenance underwent another alteration, and, after pausing a few minutes, replied, he feared it would not be in his power to avail himself of my intelligence. I have, continued he, promised to spend to-morrow with a friend

friend of Mrs. Hamilton's, who lives some miles from Bath; the next day I am obliged to go to Bristol on business of the utmost consequence, from whence I shall not return till late, and the following morning we set out on our return to Wales. To confess the truth, I dare not see Miss Raynsford at present, as I am fearful the sight of me, by recalling the idea of her father, might occasion emotions injurious to her health; and I am not selfish enough to indulge my own inclination at the expence of giving her a moment's pain. Between ourselves, Julia, I thought this an overstrained piece of delicacy; but it was not my place to tell him so, or that I had been informed too great refinement was the only shade in his character. We conversed for almost an hour longer on you and your family; and though he sometimes changed the subject, by en-

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quiring after Miss Vernon, and his other Devonshire friends, he continually returned to it with evident satisfaction. To my great regret he left us before the party broke up. I then told Sir John it was fortunate for me his friend was a married man, as I should certainly have lost my heart to him, had he been disengaged: and if you had, replied he, you would not have been singular. Mr. Hamilton is possessed of every advantage except fortune, and, to my own knowledge, has had several opportunities of raising himself by marriage to affluence and splendor; but All for Love was his motto, and though I am so unfashionable as not to condemn him for consulting affection rather than interest in the choice of a wife, particularly as Mrs. Hamilton is really an amiable woman, I cannot but regret that, in compliance with her wishes, he has  
quitted

quitted a way of life for which he was particularly well qualified, and buried himself in solitude. I imagine, answered I, he begins to be tired of that solitude, or he would not have remained so long in this gay, dissipated place. No, replied he, you are mistaken; his coming to Bath, and his stay in it, originate from the same motive which appears to govern all his actions; he came in compliance with Mrs. Hamilton's entreaties, who was miserable lest his constitution should be injured by a bilious complaint which has long hung upon him, and is now leaving it sooner than the physician approves of, because he fancies the air has been prejudicial to her. Sir John then related to me a variety of anecdotes, every one of which heightened the esteem I already felt for his friend, and concluded with saying, that as his circumstances were extremely

limited, the expences attending this journey must involve him in difficulties.

Miss Egerton had not till this instant remarked how much I was affected by the latter part of her recital; but now observing the tears which I could not restrain, she suddenly stopped, and looking at me with great concern, said, I fear, Miss Raynsford, I have done a very wrong thing, and given you pain instead of amusing you, as I intended. Believe me, interrupted I, you misinterpret my concern, if you imagine it proceeds from any motive but regret, that the man who deserves every blessing that fortune could bestow, and for whom my father entertained the most unbounded esteem, should be reduced to distresses so unworthy of him: I am, however, happy in the idea that his embarrassments



barassments will not be of long continuance; and then in the fulness of my heart, and under the seal of secrecy, I related to her my father's dying request, and the reason which deterred me from putting it into execution till I was of age. She listened to me very attentively, and then said, I hope you will pardon me, Miss Raynsford, nor imagine I intend extorting a secret which you wish to conceal, but I cannot help fancying you feel more for Mr. Hamilton than you are willing to confess even to yourself, or you would not think it possible your motive for assisting him could be misconstrued. Your conjectures, replied I, are not entirely ill-founded; if I know my own heart, it has never since his marriage felt more for him than the affection of friendship; but I will not deny there was a time, when it regarded him in a still tenderer  
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light; and as I am not certain how far my sentiments were then discovered by the world, and am sensible that men, particularly elderly ones, are seldom capable of making distinctions, I tremble lest my guardians should suppose I still retain an attachment to him inconsistent with the engagements he has entered into. The idea of loving a married man is so repugnant to every principle of honour and virtue, that I cannot bear to run the slightest hazard of incurring such a censure. I then repeated to Miss Egerton all I thought myself at liberty to reveal of Mr. Hamilton's own and family history. Delighted with this mark of confidence, and interested in the subject, it was with difficulty she prevailed on herself to leave me to fulfil her engagement. When she was gone, unwilling to give way to the uneasiness I could not help feeling at being in the same

same place with Hamilton, without the possibility of seeing him, I determined to spend the remainder of the evening with Lady Ann Lloyd, whose lodgings are only a few doors from mine. As I returned home, I saw something lying on the pavement, which, ordering the servant to take up, I found to be a small shagreen case. Before I retired to rest I examined my prize, that I might the next day be enabled to restore it to the owner; but, guess my surprize, when I saw it was a miniature-picture of Hamilton; the resemblance was too striking, and his idea too deeply engraved on my mind, to admit a possibility of mistake; and I blush to confess my heart, at this instant, gave way to a tenderness which I hoped had been long entirely subdued. I gazed on the lifeless image of a man once so dear to me, till the tears, which fell in large drops

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from



from my eyes, by obscuring the object of my attention, reminded me how improperly they were employed. After a painful but momentary struggle, I replaced the picture in its case, and threw myself into a chair, overcome by a variety of reflections, among which the idea of Hamilton's embarrassed circumstances was the most painful. It at length occurred to me, that as I knew he would be absent the next day, and leave Bath the following one, I might, without impropriety, myself restore the picture to Mrs. Hamilton, and, by informing her of the legacy to which they would be in a few months entitled, relieve her mind, and consequently his, from their present uneasiness. And here, my dear, I must, in justice to my aunt's rectitude and integrity, interrupt my narrative for a moment, to tell you, that the day after we arrived at Bath, she voluntarily signed

signed a paper, binding herself, if I died before I was of age, or without a will, to pay Mr. Hamilton the sum mentioned by my father, and to dispose of another five thousand pounds in the way which she knew would be most agreeable to my wishes. But to return to my story; I was so pleased with the thoughts of my visit, that I retired to rest with tolerable composure, and this morning went at twelve o'clock in a chair to St. James's parade, attended by a servant I have lately hired. When I stopped at the house, in which I had learned from Miss Egerton the Hamiltons lodged, I ordered Thomas to enquire if either of them were at home, determined if I found, contrary to my expectations, that Mr. Hamilton was, to send up the picture, and return without leaving my name; and as I was in a chair, and  
attended

attended by a new servant, I was almost certain of not being discovered; but the answer I received from the woman of the house made this unnecessary; she said Mr. Hamilton was out of town, but his Lady was above stairs. I desired she would go up and tell her a Lady desired to speak with her on particular business; in consequence of which I was requested to walk up. And now that I was on the point of obtaining what I aimed at, my spirits entirely failed me, I felt as if doing a wrong action, and earnestly wished to recede; but that was impossible. I followed the woman to the drawing-room, my agitation encreasing every moment, and when I entered it, my heart felt as if clasping by the cold hand of death. Mrs. Hamilton received me very politely, but observing the paleness of my countenance, said, she feared something had alarmed



alarmed me, and begged I would give her leave to order some drops and water. This I declined, and attributed my disorder, as I truly might, to a late indisposition, and to my spirits having been extremely hurried on that and the preceding day. I then explained the reason of my visit, and taking the picture from my pocket, informed her by what means it came into my possession. She received it with evident pleasure, and said Mr. Hamilton had taken it the evening before to shew a gentleman of his acquaintance, and imagined he must have dropped it in his return from the upper town. But may I not, Madam, said she, request the name of the Lady who has been so good as to restore to me, what I would not have lost for the whole world. I told her when she knew my name was Raynsford, she would not be surprized that I guessed from the resemblance

semblance to whom it belonged, particularly as I had learned the same evening, that she and Mr. Hamilton were at Bath. Is it possible, exclaimed she, that this picture, on which I have long set so high a value, should now have an additional one, by procuring me the honor of a visit from Miss Raynsford? How much do I regret that Mr. Hamilton is absent this morning, and how great will be his concern, that by not knowing you were in Bath, he has been deprived of the happiness of waiting on a Lady, of whom I have often heard him speak in the highest terms, and to whose family he is under such particular obligations; but if he returns in time, will you permit him to pay his respects to you this evening? I replied, I would not give him that trouble, as I was indispensably obliged to be from home; but at some future period should be happy

to

to see them both; and in the mean time I wished to mention an affair which was of some consequence. I then informed her of my father's verbal legacy, adding, that though I had particular reasons for not applying to my guardians, and consequently could not pay the principal till I was of age, I considered it as due from the time of his death, and must insist on Mr. Hamilton's receiving the interest whilst it remained in my possession; and since, continued I, the distance between our places of residence makes the remittance of money inconvenient and hazardous, you will particularly oblige me, and really relieve my mind, by permitting me to take the opportunity of paying it now, instead of waiting to the end of the year. Then laying the notes on the table, I was rising to take leave, when suddenly catching my hand, You are, said she, the  
very



very Miss Raynsford I have been taught to admire; but though I perfectly understand your generous design, I dare not avail myself of it in Mr. Hamilton's absence; he is too kind, too indulgent to blame his Louisa, but I am sure he would be distressed by my receiving so considerable a present. Believe me, said I, you call it by an improper name, and consider this whole affair in a wrong light. I am well acquainted with Mr. Hamilton's delicacy, but it certainly cannot be injured by the dying bequest of a friend; upon my honour it is not a present from me, I wish you to accept, but a last proof of the affection of one, who loved him with paternal regard. The fear of offending me, by persisting in her refusal, at length induced Mrs. Hamilton to receive the bills. When I had gained this point, I begged she would let me know before the year was elapsed,

clasped, into whose hands I should pay the principal, and informed her of the paper my aunt had signed, in case I died before I came of age. She could no longer suppress her emotions, but throwing her arms round me, and bursting into tears, Oh, Miss Raynsford, said she, I hope you will long live, happy in yourself, and a blessing to all who know you. Pardon me this liberty, but I know not how to express or restrain my gratitude. Will you add to it by permitting me to love you, and by allowing me, if not for my own sake, for the sake of Hamilton, some share of your esteem? I tenderly embraced her, assuring her she already possessed it in a very high degree, and that I should be happy in her friendship, if she would convince me of its sincerity, by employing my fortune and interest, could they at any time be conducive to her welfare; then hastening from

from her, I returned home in a much happier frame of mind than I was in when I left it.

On a review of my conduct, I could not condemn any one part of it through the whole of this transaction, and reflected with conscious pleasure, that had my bosom been transparent, it would not have betrayed an unworthy or improper thought. During my conversation with Louisa, my heart experienced no emotions but those of pleasure, arising from the idea of assisting Hamilton, without making him feel the weight of an obligation; and a kind of tender regard for the woman who seemed so well to deserve, and so sincerely to return his affection. I have been told that in a female breast, envy, revenge, and hatred are the certain consequences of disappointed love; but violent as my disposition is generally



generally thought, I can truly say I am totally a stranger to these tormenting passions. That I deeply regretted the loss of Augustus, is true, and that I still think, could he have been mine, without injuring his own honour, or the peace of any other person, I should have been the happiest of my sex, is equally true; but from the time my father received the letter which informed him of his marriage, I approved his conduct, and sincerely wished he might be happy with her, who had certainly a prior right to his heart and hand. Since my interview with Louisa, I am still more inclined to applaud him, and esteem her; she is really, my dear, a lovely young woman, her person, complexion, and features, delicate even to an excess; and there is in her manner a mixture of naïveté and animation, which renders her uncommonly interesting. I at first intended to

keep this affair a secret from my aunt, but recollecting how well her behaviour entitled her to my confidence, and my aversion to every kind of concealment, induced me to alter my resolution; and I had the pleasure of seeing she approved the part I had acted. May Lady Willoughby be equally favorable, and I hope you will not imagine, that by my introduction to Mrs. Hamilton, I had any intention of laying the foundation of future intimacy. To the utmost extent of my power, I will ever assist them both; but, though from what I have seen of Louisa, I really believe I should soon be attached to her, and receive great pleasure from her society, I will never indulge myself in a personal intercourse, which must perpetually throw me in the way of a man, whom I am determined to avoid, till I am certain I can see him with perfect indifference: such  
a mode

a mode of conduct would be indelicate and improper with regard to myself, and highly unjust to him, after his confession to my father.

I shall send this letter by the post, as Charles Ardley is obliged, from some family business, to postpone his journey, which I am not sorry for, as it is rather of too much consequence to be intrusted to the care of a giddy young man. Write to me again before you leave Paris, and believe I am ever affectionately yours,

JULIA RAYNSFORD.



100. RAYNSFORD PARK.

LETTER XLV.

TO MISS BYBLYN.

YOUR letter, my dear Harriet, gave me the highest satisfaction, not only from the account it contained of yours and Lady Willoughby's health, but as it relieved my mind from the uneasiness it sometimes felt, lest my conduct should be disapproved of by those friends, whose esteem and good opinion are of the utmost consequence to my peace. I flatter myself

myself this will find you safely arrived at Florence, and that your journey from Paris to that place was productive of pleasure to yourself and the amiable party you are with. I know you will be delighted when I tell you, my own health is perfectly re-established, and that I grow every day more cheerful; indeed, I believe I shall soon recover that natural vivacity, which has been overclouded, but not destroyed, by the events of the last four years. I can now recall the memory of my beloved parents, without those violent transports of grief you have too often witnessed; and the calm melancholy which their remembrance still inspires, is softened by the consciousness that I never intentionally displeased or gave them pain, and elevated by the hope of meeting them again in a better world; and even that unfortunate attachment, which for many months em-

bittered the pleasure of my life, begins to give place to a tender, but calm friendship, which I know I may indulge without offence to delicacy or virtue. When I concluded my last letter to you, I was excessively uneasy lest Hamilton should return the notes, which I hoped would relieve him from his embarrassments; but the next morning my anxiety was removed, by receiving the following lines :

‘ DEAR MADAM,

‘ Mr. Hamilton was too much affected  
 ‘ by your goodness, to write his thanks,  
 ‘ I therefore undertake the pleasing, but  
 ‘ difficult task, of expressing his gratitude,  
 ‘ as well as my own. He begs  
 ‘ me to tell you, Sir William’s noble  
 ‘ legacy gives him the most heartfelt  
 ‘ satisfaction; a satisfaction not arising  
 ‘ from selfish motives, but from its  
 ‘ being



being a convincing proof, that his  
revered friend loved him, even to  
the close of life with unabated affection;  
and that as to the notes you left with  
me, though he dares not hazard your  
displeasure by refusing them, he must  
be allowed to receive them, not as a  
right, but as an instance of that un-  
bounded generosity which marks your  
character. And now, as to myself,  
what shall I say, since I know no words  
adequate to my feelings, yet permit  
me to avow, that excepting my Au-  
gustus, I love and admire you more  
than I do any human being, and sure  
no other can equally deserve love and  
admiration. A few days since I was  
impatient to return to that solitude, in  
which I had spent so many happy  
hours, but I now look with regret at  
the carriage, which is waiting to con-  
vey me from the place where you are;

‘ but most earnestly do I hope I shall one  
 ‘ day see you again, and personally re-  
 ‘ turn my thanks for the additional hap-  
 ‘ piness you have given to,

‘ My dear Miss Raynsford,

‘ Your ever obliged

‘ and truly grateful

‘ LOUISA HAMILTON.’

There is no describing the serene joy I felt from the perusal of this letter; next to the assistance of Heaven, and the lesson I have learned from you, that every event is intended ultimately by Providence for our advantage, if we do not frustrate its designs by our own presumptuous obstinacy, the idea that I have been enabled to contribute to the happiness of Hamilton and Louisa, has been the principal means of restoring me to tranquillity. This desirable change has also been promoted by the habit I have

have acquired, of constantly keeping my mind rationally and usefully employed, or agreeably amused, and surely no place can be better calculated than Bath for both these purposes. Exclusive of all its other advantages, the variety of character it affords, is to me a perpetual source of pleasure; since I never go into company, without meeting with, at least, one who interests or amuses me; but though there certainly are more estimable and agreeable people here than in any other part of the world, there are undoubtedly many of a different description; and I have strictly followed Lady Willoughby's advice, not to admit any into the number of my acquaintance, unless recommended by those on whom I could depend. But for this caution, my frankness of temper and general love of society, would, I am convinced, have involved me in diffi-



culties, by introducing me to a circle totally different from those I have been accustomed to converse with. I hope and believe I am neither rigid nor censorious, but I have been ever taught to shun the vicious and unprincipled, however distinguished by rank, talents, or fortune; and am often distressed by seeing women of consequence and merit, degrade themselves by condescending to visit, and even form intimacies, with those whose scandalous connections and immoral conduct, is not only talked of in their own circle, but the subject of conversation to people in an inferior line, many of whom would disdain to appear with those, who are thus countenanced by their superiors. It was my father's observation, that the depravity of manners too prevalent in the higher classes of life, was principally owing to carelessness in this point. The most profligate,

fligate, he would often say, pay an involuntary homage to the virtue they affect to despise; and women of that stamp, when allowed to form an acquaintance with those among their own sex, who possess this advantage, feel a malignant pleasure in bringing them down to their own level; and by improper conversation, and a variety of other methods, they generally effect their purpose. Liberality of sentiment is always pleaded in favor of these indiscreet intimacies; but let me ask the liberal minded ladies, who make no scruple of appearing in public with fashionable demi-reps, and female libertines of quality, whether they would choose to be seen at the Play, the Opera, or the Pantheon, with women of inferior station and vulgar connections? and surely, if it is necessary for the good of society, that distinctions of rank should be ob-

served, distinction of character ought not to be totally disregarded. This was invariably my father's mode of thinking, and I am sure you will allow its justice; but I know not why I have expatiated so long on an error, which I hope there is no danger of my committing; possessed of yours and Lady Willoughby's affections; once loved, and, I flatter myself, still esteemed by Hamilton, I must be depraved indeed, were I capable of forming a connection with the unworthy of either sex. When I first came to Bath, I have reason to believe I was considered as an easy prey by the adventurers and gamblers who frequent this place; a woman but just turned of twenty, in possession of a large fortune, and entirely her own mistress, was a prize not to be neglected; but my conduct soon made them give me up as impracticable, and they now revenge them-

selves



selves by representing me every where as a proud, haughty girl. Yet surely, my dear, I do not deserve that character; instead of considering the advantages I am blessed with, as entitling me to behave with insolence, I endeavor to evince my gratitude to Heaven, by making, to the utmost of my power, my fellow-creatures happy. The advances made me by those whose manners and morals I disapprove, I will ever repel by a determined, though civil reserve; but real merit, however undistinguished by rank and fortune, shall never have reason to accuse me of pride or arrogance; and though from principle, as well as inclination, I shall ever detest those women, who, by the effrontery of their behavior, attempt to blind the world to the misconduct they are determined to persist in; the truly penitent, whatever their past errors

may have been, shall ever be assured of my assistance, countenance, and protection.

I have been led into these reflections by an incident which will be particularly interesting to you, as it was the means of introducing me to Lady Harrington. I was a few evenings since in a mixed party at Mrs. Wentworth's, in Brook-street; the conversation turned on the distress of a young woman, who had been abandoned by her seducer to all the evils of poverty and sickness. I was so much affected by the account given of her situation, that I enquired with some earnestness where she was to be found, but before I could receive an answer, a lady, whose acquaintance I had declined, said, with a malignant sneer, You, Miss Raynsford, certainly will not think of assisting this unfortunate girl; the purity of

of your virtue would be contaminated by such an action, as I have been assured you never condescend to speak to any unless they are perfect Dianas as to character.—A little observation would convince you of the falsehood of that report, replied I, with great coolness, Dianas are as seldom met with as Minervas, and my voice would be of little use to me, were I to adhere to such a rule; but, believe me, Madam, I make distinctions, and can pity those who suffer for their errors, particularly if, as is often the case in lower life, they have not been taught the proper difference between good and evil. Then turning from her to the lady who began the subject, I repeated my question, and was informed the poor girl lodged in a garret, at the house of a taylor, in Walcot-street. The following morning I went to the place, accompanied by

Fanny



Fanny Lloyd, and, enquiring as I had been directed, for Lucy Davis, was shewn up to a room, in which I expected to find every appearance of wretchedness and poverty; but, to my great surprise, the room, though of course small and mean, was neat to an excess: there was a good fire, several bottles of medicine on the table, and the door was opened by an elderly well-looking woman, who told me she attended Lucy as a nurse: the poor girl herself, decently dressed, was sitting in an easy-chair, supported by pillows; she endeavoured to rise when we entered, but this we would not permit. When we informed her of the reason of our visit, she said we were very good; that she had, indeed, been in extreme distress, but that a lady, with whom her landlady's daughter lived as a servant, and who came to Bath only two days before, had provided not only every

every necessary, but every convenience she could possibly want, and promised, if she recovered her health, to get her a place in the country; the Lady's name she said was Harrington, and that she was one of the best of women. You may imagine how much pleasure I received from this intelligence, which I determined to avail myself of as soon as possible. After obliging this young woman to accept a trifle as an atonement for our intrusion, I returned home, determined to obtain an immediate introduction to a lady, whom, on your account, I considered as one of my best friends. I heard from Lucy that Lady Harrington lodged only in Bennet-street; and, as the simplest method of gaining a point always appears to me the most eligible, I wrote a note to her, requesting the honor of her acquaintance, and informing her of the motives which  
made

made me too impatient for that happiness, to wait for the formality of being introduced by a third person. The answer returned was exactly correspondent to my wishes; after thanking me for the favor I conferred, she begged I would add to it by waving all ceremony, and spending that evening with her en famille. I readily accepted the invitation, and was received by Lady Harrington with a polite frankness, which increased the prepossession I felt for her. Our conversation turned principally on you and Lady Willoughby; the similarity of our sentiments on both these subjects, familiarized us so much to each other, that we lost all idea of new acquaintance, and, when my chair came, she pressed me with such earnestness to stay supper, that I willingly assented. Miss Harrington had been from home all day; but by this means I had an opportunity



opportunity of seeing her, and was as much pleased with her appearance as I had been with that of her mother, to whom, indeed, she bears a striking resemblance. When the ceremony of introduction was over, Lady Harrington said she now particularly regretted the absence of her younger daughters; they are, continued she, gone with Sir Thomas to an estate lately left him near Dorchester, and, as we design it for our future place of residence, they are busily employed in getting every thing ready for mine and Augusta's reception when we leave Bath; and, as Dorsetshire and Devonshire are neighbouring counties, I hope, Miss Raynsford, the pleasure they must receive from your acquaintance will only be delayed, as I flatter myself you will allow us to cultivate in the country, a friendship so agreeably begun in a place, where a thousand intimacies  
are

are formed, which never outlive the season. I made every proper acknowledgment for this goodness, and it was mutually agreed that we should not only visit frequently, when returned to our respective houses, but spend as much time as possible together whilst we remained at Bath. The latter part of this engagement has been strictly fulfilled, and, I have reason to think, the former will be adhered to with equal pleasure. at any time an introduction to this family would have been a very agreeable circumstance, at present it is particularly fortunate, as most of my friends have left, or are leaving Bath. The Ardleys and Egertons went last week, and Lady Anne sets out to-morrow for Wales, where I have promised to follow her in a month, or six weeks. My aunt has declined a pressing invitation to accompany me, from a wish of spending the summer

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summer at Richmond, where she has some friends to whom she is much attached, but I shall not be distressed for a companion, as Mr. Vernon has consented that Charlotte should take this opportunity of paying a visit to Lady Anne. I expect her here the beginning of May for that purpose, and we have formed a plan for the ensuing six months, which I hope will be productive of happiness or pleasure to every one engaged in it. After remaining seven or eight weeks at Mortimer Castle, the whole party, escorted by Edmund Ardley, who, though he cannot accompany us into Wales, is to follow as soon as possible, are to set out on a tour through the midland and northern counties to Scarborough, where we intend to remain till the latter end of September, and then, taking leave of our amiable friends, who will stay longer, if Miss Lloyd



118 RAYNSFORD PARK.

Lloyd finds benefit from the waters, we shall proceed directly for London, where the Ardley family and Mr. Vernon are to meet us, and, after devoting a month to preparations, settlements, &c. Charlotte has promised to give her hand to Edmund. From the considerable place he holds in the Treasury, they will be obliged to reside almost constantly in London; an elegant house in Somerset-street is already engaged for their reception; and I shall, I believe, continue with them till near Christmas, when I intend returning to Raynsford Park, and remaining quietly there till I am of age: after that, my motions will be directed by your's and Lady Willoughby's; if you prolong your stay abroad, I shall certainly join you; but I rather hope you will return to England. When speaking of the Harrington family, I forgot to mention that I have frequently seen your friend

friend Annette, and that she is as high as ever in her Lady's favour; but this is unnecessary intelligence, as Lady Harrington herself intends writing to you in a few days. Farewel, my beloved friend, be assured,

I am ever yours, and

Lady Willoughby's most devoted

JULIA RAYNSFORD.

120 RAYNSFORD PARK.

LETTER XLVI.

TO LORD WILLIAM MONTAGUE.

The Cottage, April 14.

**A**FTER an excursion, from which I received more benefit and pleasure than I expected, I am again settled in my rural habitation; but though my health is re-established, my mind is at present torn by the most painful apprehensions for my Louisa. She is ill, Montague, extremely ill, and notwithstanding her unwillingness to leave this place, at a time  
when



when its natural beauties are every day improving, and the opinion of the Physician, who assures me the medicines and regimen he has prescribed will probably restore her, I have determined to carry her to Bristol, if she is not considerably better in a few days. This illness is originally owing to an accident we met with on our journey from Bath. Driving through a little town about sixty miles from our own dwelling, our chaise was unfortunately overturned by the carelessness of the postillion; I was on the lower side, and, endeavouring to save Louisa from the consequences of the fall, my shoulder was dislocated, and I received a violent bruise on my arm. By the assistance of a tolerably skilful surgeon, I was soon in a condition to pursue my journey; but the alarm Louisa had suffered on my account, more than the terror she had felt

on her own, hastened an event to which she had ever looked forward with timid apprehension: she was soon out of immediate danger, but a complaint remained on her lungs, which has been encreasing ever since, though she endeavours as much as possible to conceal it. I ever esteemed Louisa, but her unremitting tenderness, and the thousand amiable qualities she possesses, have now made a most lively impression on my heart, and I cannot bear the remotest idea of losing her. You will imagine how much I am interested in this subject, when I tell you I was going to conclude my letter without mentioning another, which, in justice to Miss Raynsford, I think I ought to inform you of. Two evenings before I left Bath, I was told she had been some days in that place; the agitation I felt from this intelligence, convinced

vinced me I ought to adhere to the resolution of never seeing her again. I spent the next day at the house of a gentleman a few miles from Bath, and, returning early in the evening, recollected, that as I was indispensably engaged the following one, I should have no other opportunity of calling on Mr. Fitzwilliams, from whom I had received very particular civilities. My way from his house to St. James's Parade was through the Circus, and my feet almost involuntarily carried me to that part of it where I knew Miss Raynsford lodged; though I solemnly declare I had not five minutes before the most distant intention of the kind. I walked before the house near a quarter of an hour, without any design of gaining admittance, merely to indulge myself in the pleasure of gazing at the walls and windows, and,



whilst I was thus employed, I by some means dropped a miniature picture of myself, which was accidentally in my pocket. Reflection at last forced me to quit the beloved spot, to which I felt myself so irresistibly attracted, that I was more than once tempted to return and request a moment's interview with Miss Raynsford. I, however, conquered this improper wish, and even subdued myself so far, as to endeavour to rejoice that my going to Bristol the next day, precluded the possibility of seeing her. I set out early, and did not return till late in the evening, when I found Louisa extremely agitated by sensations, which evidently arose from a mixture of pleasure and admiration. She informed me she had received a visit from Miss Raynsford, who, under pretence of restoring the picture, had insisted on her accepting

accepting notes to a very considerable amount, as interest on a legacy bequeathed me by her father, the principal of which should be paid the moment she was of age. Whatever right I had to the legacy, I well knew I had none to the interest, and should have returned the notes, but for Louisa's sollicitations, who could not bear the idea of displeasing Miss Raynsford: no other motive could have induced me to accept them, though my circumstances were, I confess, greatly deranged by the expences of my journey to, and residence in Bath; and I was on the point of applying to your friendship for assistance, when I received this supply. O Master, as I shall be, at the end of the year, of five thousand pounds, I can never again be in the same predicament; my heart at this instant overflows with gratitude to Sir

G 3 William,

William, and with every sentiment, that, circumstanced as I am, I dare indulge for the noble, the generous Julia. The delicacy and propriety of her behaviour in this late transaction, has, if possible, heightened my admiration; and whilst I confine that admiration within proper bounds, I surely may be allowed to indulge it. Were I inclined to forget Miss Raynsford, Louisa will not permit it; she is continually expatiating on her beauty, her elegance, and that expressive grace, which accompanies her every word and action; and dwells on this scene with such sweet simplicity, and apparent delight, that whilst recalling Julia's idea to my remembrance, she encreases my attachment to herself.

Farewell, my dear Montague, may you ever be free from those painful and  
contradictory



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contradictory emotions, which have so long oppressed the heart of

Your faithful

AUGUSTUS HAMILTON.

128 RAYNSFORD PARK.

LETTER XLVII.

TO MISS EVELYN.

Mortimer Castle, May 15.

**W**E yesterday arrived at this fine old mansion, after meeting in our way an adventure so unexpected and interesting, that I cannot be easy till I have given you a circumstantial relation of it: that I may do this without interruption, I have requested my friends to allow me to devote the whole morning to writing. I informed you in my last, I expected  
Charlotte

Charlotte to join me at Bath previous to our journey; she came at the time appointed, and after giving a day or two to the society of those friends I most valued, particularly the amiable Harringtons, we began to settle our plan. Though we both knew Lady Anne possessed in a very high degree the true spirit of English hospitality, we wished not to incumber her with an useless retinue of servants, who are generally more troublesome than their principals, and agreed to go with post horses to my carriage, and attended only by William and Lucy. Miss Vernon is accustomed to travelling; confiding in her, and not feeling a single apprehension, I was pleased with a scheme which promised both novelty and expedition; but Edmund Ardley, who, to pay his devoirs to us, took Bath in his way from Exeter to London, expressed such extreme uneasi-



ness at the idea of our taking the journey so slenderly guarded, that, to satisfy him, we changed our plan, and set out with my own coachman, postillion, and horses, and not only attended by two servants of mine, but by one of Mr. Vernon's, on whom Edmund placed particular dependence. I was sensible, that by this new arrangement, we should be detained longer on the road, but consoled myself by reflecting I should have a better opportunity of observing the beauties of the country, and determining to send back three of the servants, and one pair of the horses, as soon as we arrived in Wales, and notwithstanding all Lady Anne could urge, to keep the others at an inn, we made ourselves perfectly easy. We made short stages, on account of the horses, who, from being favorites of my father's, are peculiarly so of mine; but arriving early  
the

the second afternoon at Worcester, we found the inn to which we had been recommended, full of officers as well as of other company, and that without laying ourselves under obligations to the former, we could not procure tolerable apartments; we therefore determined to go on to the next stage. When we left Worcester, the weather was to all appearance remarkably fine; but we had not proceeded many miles, before we were overtaken by a violent storm; the rain fell in torrents, accompanied by the loudest thunder and most vivid lightning I had ever heard or seen. Though neither Charlotte or myself are naturally fearful, the scene was too tremendous not to inspire us both with awe and apprehension; but we forgot our own fears in endeavouring to reassure Lucy; the poor girl for some time attempted, out of respect to us, to repress her ter-

rors ; but at last, totally overcome by them, she fell without sense or motion to the bottom of the carriage. Terrified by her situation, I ordered Robert to drive back as fast as possible to Worcester, but in turning the carriage to obey me, one of the wheels gave way, and had it not been for the assistance of the servants, who happily were on the side where the accident happened, we must inevitably have been overturned. I was now in real distress, nor knew how to extricate myself from it, but by sending for another carriage, which would have detained us an hour or two longer in the storm ; when Thomas, the new servant, whom I mentioned on a former occasion, relieved me, by saying he once lived with a gentleman who often travelled that road, and that down a lane, about a mile distant, there was a little public house, where we might

at



at least be sheltered from the weather. This, as we were circumstanced, was delightful intelligence; I ordered him to lead the way, and, by the help of the other servants, the coach was dragged to the place he mentioned, where we were received by a neat elderly woman, who, after lamenting that she had no place fit for such gentry, shewed us into a little parlour, which exactly resembled that described by Goldsmith, in his *Deserted Village*. Lucy was by this time tolerably recovered, and committing her to the care of the landlady, and desiring the men servants to have every proper refreshment, I ordered the carriage to be repaired immediately, as I wished to pursue my journey; but finding this was impossible, as it was now near eight o'clock, and Robert assuring me the wheel could not be mended in less than two hours, we made

a virtue

a virtue of necessity, and determining to remain where we were till the next morning, sat down cheerfully to our tea, attended by our landlady, who told us her name was Jones, and gave us many particulars of herself and family, with such evident pleasure and simple civility, that though her relation, as you may imagine, was neither amusing nor interesting, we could not resolve to shock her feelings, or mortify her into silence, by inattention or reserve. The good woman was so elated by our notice, and the encomiums we bestowed on the neatness of her parlour, that she begged we would walk up and see the chamber we were to sleep in, which she assured us was in every respect a much better room: we complied with her request, and were really surprised at the manner in which the apartment was furnished and fitted up, till

till she accounted for it by saying, it was done by an old gentleman, who for several years had come from London, and resided there for two or three months in the summer. He was a good friend of mine, continued she, and at his death, which happened only last winter, left me all the furniture, and fifty pounds to my youngest son, besides some books, which (opening a closet) you are very welcome to look at; and I am more glad than ever I was before, that the room is in such nice order, since such great ladies are to sleep in it. She then left us to prepare supper. On examining the books, we found they consisted principally of sermons, magazines and periodical papers. I took down a volume of the Spectator, and amused myself with it, whilst Miss Vernon, who was more fatigued, threw herself upon the bed; but my read-

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ing



ing and her repose were soon disturbed by the sound of a carriage, and in an instant the door of the house was beat with such violence, that I felt a momentary alarm; but recollecting how well we were guarded, acknowledged, for the first time, Mr. Ardley was right. Curiosity succeeded apprehension, but the evening was so dark we could see nothing from the windows; we entertained ourselves a few moments with imagining who our new guests could possibly be, when Mrs. Jones came into the room, with every appearance of concern. Oh, Madam, said she, I do not know what I shall do, there are a gentleman and lady below, who have been driven here by the weather; the poor lady is so ill, that I really believe she will die, unless you will allow her to be put into this bed, as I have not another in the house, except

cept a very poor one in the garret, and that where my husband and I sleep, and he is such a surly kind of man, that if he should come home and find I have let ours, he will certainly beat me. We desired she would make herself easy, as we would do every thing to accommodate the lady: she blest us a thousand times for our charity and goodness, and then ran down stairs with the welcome intelligence. I soon followed her myself, to give all the assistance in my power, leaving Charlotte to adjust her dress; but oh, Harriet, imagine, if you possibly can, what I felt when on opening the parlour door, I saw Hamilton tenderly supporting Louisa, whilst Mrs. Jones was rubbing her temples; when I entered the room his back was towards me, but at the exclamation I could not help uttering, he suddenly looked round, and exclaiming in his turn,

turn, It is Miss Raynsford, sprang to meet me, with a countenance in which joy and surprize were, for a moment, visibly painted; but summoning all my resolution, and not daring, at that instant, either to speak to or look at him, I hastily went up to Mrs. Hamilton, and asked her if she would acknowledge me as an acquaintance and a friend. Though she appeared almost in a state of insensibility but a minute before, at the sound of my voice she raised her eyes, and fixing them languidly on my face, burst into tears, but instantly recovering herself, Yes, Miss Raynsford, said she, it is my pride and pleasure to consider you as my friend, and that Heaven, to whom my prayers for your health and welfare have been constantly addressed, can witness the extreme pleasure I feel from this meeting, and how grateful I am at being once more allowed



lowed to see you. You will often, very often, I hope, see me, replied I; but what occasions this dejection? does it proceed from indisposition, or from any misfortune I may be so happy as to relieve? You are very good, Miss Raynsford, replied Hamilton, visibly struggling with a thousand different emotions; Louisa has been very ill since she had the honor of seeing you at Bath, but I flatter myself the Bristol waters will entirely restore her. Ah, Hamilton, said she, this solicitude will, I fear, answer no purpose, but that of giving your own heart the pain of disappointment, and adding to the reluctance I already feel at the idea of resigning a life, that has been rendered uncommonly happy by your tenderness; however, be the event of this journey what it may, I now rejoice that I undertook it in compliance with your wishes, since it has  
given

given me an opportunity of seeing Miss Raynsford; and I shall ever bless the storm which so lately terrified me, for obliging us to take refuge in the same place with her. I was affected, both by her words and manner, and endeavored to soothe, and convince her how sensible I was of the esteem she expressed for me; yet though I can truly say my heart was unconscious of any sentiment but those of the tenderest compassion, I felt greatly embarrassed at this unexpected meeting with the man I once ardently loved, and who, I knew from his own confession, had entertained a passion for me; and the more, as I thought Mrs. Hamilton would observe the constraint I evidently saw in his manners, and imagined it must be equally visible in mine. The entrance of Charlotte, seasonably relieved us all; she addressed Hamilton with all the cordial

dial warmth of friendship unembittered by any painful sensations. On his introducing her as one of his particular friends, Louisa appeared to lose in that idea, that she was till then an absolute stranger to herself, and recovering a transient flow of spirits, declared she found herself equal to sitting up a little longer, and would not, therefore, immediately quit so desirable a circle. I fear, Miss Raynsford, added she, I have wounded your sensibility by my late despondence, but you must impute it to the terror I suffered during the storm, though I confess, I am but too liable to sudden fits of dejection; yet why should I despair, I know I am very ill, but I am sensible the Bristol waters have recovered those whose cases, to all appearance, were more dangerous than mine. We endeavour'd to confirm these cheerful ideas, but they were of short  
 conti-



continuance; in less than half an hour she again relapsed, and was with difficulty kept from fainting. Hamilton now entreated she would retire, and taking her in his arms, carried her up stairs, followed by Charlotte, who, I believe, imagined I should not be sorry to be a few moments totally free from observation. When they were gone, I threw myself into a chair, and remained so lost in thought, that I did not know Hamilton was returned, till looking up, I saw him leaning on the back of a chair, with his eyes intently fixed on my face. I started from my seat, and enquired how he had left Louisa; I fear, said he, she is even worse than I imagined when we began this journey; but ill as she was when we quitted the room, her spirits are again returned, and she is expressing to Miss Vernon a grateful sense of the obligations you have conferred

ferred on us both. Amiable and grateful minds, replied I, are too apt to look on common acts of justice in the light of obligation, but I will go up and convince her, though I have a claim to her friendship, I have none to her gratitude. You have, answered he warmly, a claim to the esteem and admiration of the whole world; and the delicacy, the generosity — Pardon me, said I, interrupting him, but I cannot, at present, hear a syllable more on this subject; indeed, I am in haste to attend Mrs. Hamilton. I then went towards the door: as I past him, he made a motion as if to take my hand, but instantly recollecting himself, respectfully bowed, and suffered me to leave the room without speaking. I found Louisa greatly disturbed by the officiousness of Mrs. Jones, who, to enhance her opinion of our goodness, informed her  
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the room she was in belonged to me and Miss Vernon; she declared she would not go to rest, unless some method could be thought of to accommodate us; after some friendly altercation, it was settled I should sleep with her, and that Miss Vernon and Lucy should take possession of the landlady's bed, which the woman consented to, from the hope that, as it was so late, her husband would not come home; and to make all easy, I privately authorised her, should he return, to use, in my name, an argument which I was very sure would disarm his anger, and reconcile him to the inconvenience of sitting up. Louisa was very restless during the first part of the night, and about five o'clock, finding I was as little disposed to sleep as herself, began speaking of Hamilton, and expatiated on the various excellencies of his heart and mind, and the extent



extent of his understanding, with such evident satisfaction, I should have heard her with pleasure, had the subject been wholly uninteresting to myself. She then ask me, whether, considering the alliance his birth and merit entitled him to expect, my father and his other friends, were not both displeased and disappointed at the choice he had made? This question distressed me; but I evaded it as well as I could, by saying my father had too good an opinion of his judgment ever to condemn him, and that though the generality of the world were too apt to consider happiness and wealth as synonymous terms, I was certain their mutual affection was a source of far more real felicity, than the most unbounded affluence could bestow. I should, she replied, be indeed the happiest of women, were it not for one circumstance; but the slightest deviation

tion from rectitude always sooner or later brings its own punishment. I was surprised and startled by these words; but she instantly explained them. From the first of my acquaintance with Mr. Hamilton, I loved him with a degree of tendernefs, which, young and inexperienced, I could scarcely conceal, and was wholly unable to subdue; and when, induced by the most generous motives, he made me an offer of his hand, I had not resolution to refuse, what I considered as the greatest of human blessings, though I knew by accepting it, I should involve him in difficulties, and overcloud his future prospects; and my conduct was the more unpardonable, as at that time I was certain he felt no sentiments for me, but those of compassion and friendship. Since our marriage, the whole tenor of his behaviour leaves me no  
room

room to doubt, that he loves me with an affection almost equal to my own; and this conviction would make me the happiest of women, could I divest myself of the painful consciousness, that in uniting myself to him, I consulted more my own happiness than his; and that, but for me, instead of being buried in an obscure solitude, he might have raised himself to that elevated situation, he is so well calculated to adorn; for surely no woman, however splendid her fortune, could have been insensible to his addresses. All I can say in my own justification is, that my conduct, though selfish, was not mercenary, and that I used no art to draw him into an engagement, from which, however, a few months, or perhaps weeks, may release him; and then, if the fervent wish I have formed could be answered, he would indeed be rewarded for all his



affection and tenderness to me. Pardon me, Miss Raynsford, I dare not be more explicit; you will think me presumptuous, but you know not the thousandth part of the virtues that——This was too much, I could not bear it, but interrupting her, You will, I hope, said I, (and believe me, Harriet, I spoke the real wishes of my heart) be long spared to him, who so well deserves, and so truly returns your affection; but if you wish to be well, you must not give way to these desponding reflections and undeserved self reproaches. I then tried to reconcile her to herself, by every argument I could suggest, as I was convinced peace of mind was absolutely essential to the re-establishment of her health. My endeavours were attended with success; she insensibly grew more calm, and as if her heart was relieved from a heavy load by the confession she  
had

LETTER XLVII. 149

had made, in less than half an hour sunk into a sweet and tranquil slumber. I would have followed her example, but finding it impossible, I rose about eight o'clock, and went down into a meadow adjoining the house. The beauty of the morning, the fragrance of the air, and the harmony of the birds, all contributed to inspire my mind with serenity, and to fill it with cheerful ideas; my reflections on what had passed the preceding day, were far from unpleasant: satisfied with myself, and charmed with the surrounding scene, I remained on this beautiful spot above an hour, without imagining half that time had elapsed; but just as I was intending to re-enter the house, I saw Mr. Hamilton approach. I could not avoid him, without the appearance of consciousness or affectation; and, certain that I had now subdued my own emo-

H 3 tions,

tions, I advanced to meet him with apparent ease. - When he first addressed me, he was a little agitated, but it soon wore off; our conversation turned principally on my beloved father; a subject which interested without embarrassing us; he expressed the liveliest gratitude to his memory for the many obligations he had conferred upon him, particularly for his last act of kindness; he then adverted to the part I had taken in this transaction, but I absolutely declined receiving his acknowledgments, and endeavoured to convince him that I had only acted conformably to the dictates of justice, and that my advancing the interest a few months before it was due, was more convenient and satisfactory to myself, than it could possibly be to him. When I had done speaking, he said, I will not, Miss Raynsford, press acknowledgments upon you, which I see you are



are unwilling to receive; but since I have pride and pleasure in imagining myself obliged to you, why should you endeavor to convince me I am mistaken? Then suddenly turning the conversation, he asked if he might yet enquire for you by the name of Miss Evelyn; and on my answering yes, and that I was sure you had no intention of changing it, appeared surprised, as he had, he said, been told both your hand and affections were engaged before you left Kensington. I assured him, that from whatever mistake such a report might have originated, it was entirely without foundation. I then informed him how happily you were situated with Lady Willoughby, and the promise you had made of dividing your time in future between her Ladyship and me. Just as I had finished this recital, we were told by

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a servant,

a servant, that Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Vernon were waiting for us. On our entering the parlour, we found the former in every respect much better than she was the preceding evening, and the breakfast would have been a cheerful one, but for the idea of the approaching separation. It was agreed the Hamiltons should set out a few minutes before us. When Louisa was informed the chaise was ready, she took an affectionate leave of Miss Vernon, and a still more tender one of me; repeatedly begging that whatever might be the event of her journey, I would not forget her; and then giving her hand to Hamilton, walked slowly and reluctantly to the carriage; when he had placed her in it, he returned to the parlour to thank Charlotte and me for the attention we had paid her; this was, I confess,

self, a moment of trial; his countenance was as pale as death, and his voice witnessed the agitation he was in; yet I took leave of him, and supported myself with tolerable fortitude, till the carriage drove off, when the consciousness that, if I valued my own peace, I must still adhere to the resolution of never seeing him again, struck me so forcibly, I could not restrain my tears. Charlotte suffered me to indulge them for some minutes, and then, by expressing her approbation of my past conduct, and leading my thoughts insensibly to other subjects, by degrees restored my tranquillity.

The remainder of our journey was unattended by any event worth relating: Reason again resumed her empire over my mind, and my imagination, amused

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by



by the new objects which every moment presented themselves, was prevented from dwelling too intently on past events; so that when we arrived at the Castle, I was enabled to receive and return with unaffected cheerfulness, the caresses of Lady Anne and her amiable daughters, who welcomed us with every expression of pleasure. In this beautiful spot, surrounded by friends, for every one of whom I have a sincere regard, and allowed to flatter myself that a few months will restore those who are still dearer to me, I must be unpardonably discontented and ungrateful, could I allow my thoughts to dwell on painful recollections. Say every thing that is affectionate for me to Lady Willoughby, and remember, my dearest Harriet, that to confirm the good resolutions I have made, not to repine.

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repine at our separation, you must  
write frequently and minutely to

Your faithful

JULIA RAYNSFORD.

156 RAYNSFORD PARK.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO MISS RAYNSFORD.

In answer to her Letter dated April the 7th.

Florence, May 28.

I AM fure, my dear Julia, you would have been pleased to witness the innate satisfaction with which I perused your last letter: my admiration of you encreased every line I read, and I have not a doubt, but the justness of your sentiments, and propriety of your conduct,



duct, will ensure you happiness even in this life. You are sensible of my decided aversion to flattery; but it would be unjust to withhold from real merit the due tribute of applause. The noble conquest you have gained over a passion, which I once feared would have destroyed your peace and health, is truly meritorious; and the more so from the warmth of disposition which marks your character; but a spirit like yours, at once high and well regulated, and animating a mind open to conviction, is capable of every exertion, can never condescend to a mean or unworthy action, and, if inadvertently led into an error, will instantly renounce and generously acknowledge it. Your reflections on the proper choice of company are worthy of yourself, and breathe the true spirit of delicacy and benevolence. I am charmed at your

introduction

introduction to Lady Harrington, as I know you will be pleased with each other, and feel inexpressible pride in the assurance that she will be convinced my description of you was not dictated by partiality.

In the short letter I wrote you immediately on our arrival at Florence, I had only time to say we were well, and had met with no unpleasant accident; but this is speaking too slightly of a journey, which was really uncommonly pleasant. We went by short stages from Paris to Marseilles, where we embarked for Leghorn, as Lady Willoughby, though she had no fears for herself, did not choose to trust her children over the Alps. I concealed my own wishes, as they did not entirely correspond with her's, and I knew she would be hurt at disappointing the  
the

the hope I had formed of seeing Mount Cenis. In travelling through France every circumstance conspired to give us pleasure; the fineness of the weather gave additional charms to the beauty of the country, and we made frequent excursions from the direct road, to every place which Lord Willoughby thought worthy our attention. The only alloy to our satisfaction was the extreme poverty of the peasants; but even this was lessened by the general cheerfulness observable in their looks and manner. You know how partial I am to little Edward, but in this journey he made an absolute conquest of my heart. I had never before an opportunity of seeing his sensibility so strongly excited, nor did I believe it possible a child of his age, could possess this amiable quality in so high a degree. Every beggar we met attracted his



his attention, and when he had disposed of all his little stock of money, it was with difficulty we prevented him from pulling off his clothes, to accommodate some half-naked children, who crowded about the carriage, when we stopped the second day to change horses; but not being allowed to strip himself, plentifully gave his tears for want of something better to bestow. Eliza, who had herself been very liberal, but whose more volatile disposition does not incline her equally to sympathize with the distressed, reproved him for this childishness with that womanly air of importance, which she often assumes from the advantage of being two years older; but she was in turn checked by her mother, who told her, that even when Edward was grown up she should be sorry not to see him feel as well as relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures;

tures; yet, to soften this reproof, and to shew she was pleased with the generosity of her former behaviour, she replenished both their pockets with a fresh supply of livres. Lady Willoughby, whenever she has an opportunity, generally dispenses these chance alms by the hands of her children, from an idea, that compassion even to common beggars, rather than the prudence which inculcates a disregard to their complaints, ought to be impressed on young minds. Her opinion, with regard to these wretched people, is exactly the same as my father's, who made it a rule never to pass one of them, without bestowing some trifle. I know, he would often say, there are among them numberless impostors, but as I have not the power of looking into the heart, and am convinced there are many others, who, from being bred

up,

up to this wretched way of life, or not having a legal settlement, have no better means of obtaining subsistence, can I refuse a trifling donation which may preserve a fellow-creature from perishing, who implores my compassion in the name of the Supreme Being; and, if, by pursuing this method, I have, during my life, relieved one real object, am I not amply repaid, though I may have been deceived a thousand times by false pretences?

We remained some days at Marseilles, where we embarked for Italy, and, landing at Leghorn, proceeded from thence to Florence, where a magnificent house had been previously hired for our reception. Lord and Lady Willoughby have renewed their acquaintance with several noble Florentines, and are so charmed with the place and its society, that



that I imagine most part of the time we continue abroad will be spent here. I am pleased with this, as I think we cannot be any where more pleasantly situated. Besides the first Italian families, our visiting circle includes several very agreeable English people of fashion, who reside here. I am received every where with the highest marks of distinction and regard; yet, instead of being flattered by these attentions, I am often tempted to smile when I reflect how differently many of these very people would behave, did I appear in my real character, a poor dependant on the bounty of my friends; but it is impossible they can form such an idea, when you and Lady Willoughby have almost effaced it from my own mind; or at least taught me to remember it as a subject of gratitude, not of humiliation: but as we  
must

must not, if we wish to be happy, examine too minutely into the motives of the common civility we receive, I am pleased, though not elated with the attention that is shewn me. But I have a stronger reason for wishing to remain here, which I will explain, as I think it will both interest and amuse you. Immediately on our arrival I was introduced by Lady Willoughby to the Convent of ———; the Abbess is distantly related to her Ladyship, and, on her account, behaved to me with particular regard, assuring me, whenever I had an hour to spare from the world, I should be always a welcome visitor at the grate. I availed myself of this permission, as I was really pleased with the conversation both of her and the Nuns, who, generally speaking, I found more cheerful and better instructed than I expected, and,

I was

I was charmed to observe, possessed all the enthusiasm, without the bigotry of the Roman Catholic religion. This I attribute to the example and precepts of the Abbess, of whose liberal and gentle disposition you will soon be convinced. But though I was pleased with the whole sisterhood, my attention was principally engaged by one. Adelaide, for that is the name of this fair recluse, courted my friendship with particular solicitude, and was too amiable not to meet a suitable return. I will not pretend to describe her person, except by saying that her form is elegance itself, and her face at once faultlessly beautiful and inexpressibly intelligent; her manner is uncommonly prepossessing, and she is mistress of a variety of accomplishments. She did not appear unhappy, yet the mild languor, which sometimes overspread her countenance, convinced



vinced me her heart was not entirely at ease; and once, when I complimented her on the fluency with which she spoke English, I observed her beautiful eyes instantly suffused with tears. These circumstances excited my curiosity, nor was it long before she gratified me, by explaining the source of her melancholy.

We were one morning alone at the grate, and on her appearing more dejected than usual, I could not help expressing an apprehension that she was indisposed. She replied no, that her health was better than she had any reason to expect; but that her mind had undergone a shock, she feared it would never entirely recover, and which often prevented her from appearing with the serenity, that ought to distinguish those who were devoted to the service of Heaven.

Heaven. If I was not certain, continued she, that a confession of my past errors must lower me in your esteem, I would, without hesitation, explain to you the cause of that dejection, which I know you have often observed with tender pity. I remember you once appeared pleased at the readiness with which I spoke English; alas! you little imagine the price I paid for learning your native language.—Startled at the vehemence of her manner, I expressed my concern for having, by an inadvertent question, given rise to a train of melancholy ideas, and assured her that, greatly as my curiosity was excited, I would never press her to explain herself on a subject, which gave her so much pain. But restraining her tears, and growing more calm, she replied; after what I have said, Miss Evelyn, I must entreat you to hear me, or, candid and generous

as

as you are, you may be inclined to form conjectures more unfavourable than I deserve; but that I may come by degrees to the period of my life I can never remember without emotion, I will, if it does not trespass too much on your time, inform you of some circumstances previous to it.

‘ My mother died when I was so  
 ‘ young that I can scarcely recollect  
 ‘ her; at eight years of age, myself  
 ‘ and a twin sister, were placed in this  
 ‘ Convent by my father, the Marquis  
 ‘ of Melifina, who, wishing to support  
 ‘ the splendor of his family, by leaving  
 ‘ all he was possessed of to my brother,  
 ‘ irrevocably destined us to a monastic  
 ‘ life. To prevent his views from being  
 ‘ disappointed, every method was taken  
 ‘ to inspire our young minds with a love  
 ‘ of retirement; as we grew up, we  
 were



' were taught all those polite and pleas-  
 ' ing accomplishments, which amuse  
 ' and soften the langour of solitude.  
 ' My father, whenever he visited us;  
 ' was continually representing the fel-  
 ' city of the state he had chosen for us,  
 ' and the amiable Abbess, though no  
 ' consideration could have induced her  
 ' to force our inclinations, aided his  
 ' designs, from a conviction that we  
 ' were satisfied with a lot which had  
 ' rendered her perfectly happy; and she  
 ' gave the more readily into the Mar-  
 ' quis's views, as she loved us with an  
 ' affection which made her unable to  
 ' bear the thoughts of our removal.  
 ' For several years my father's inten-  
 ' tions appeared justified; happy in our-  
 ' selves, passionately fond of each other,  
 ' and attached to the Abbess, and the  
 ' whole sisterhood, we should have con-  
 VOL. III. I . . . sidered

“sidered leaving the convent, as the  
 “greatest of misfortunes. We passed  
 “through our noviciate with great ap-  
 “plause, and then cheerfully renounced  
 “a world, which we did not imagine  
 “contained any thing worthy attention  
 “or regard. For some time our hap-  
 “piness appeared to encrease; the Ab-  
 “bess, satisfied that we had a real vo-  
 “cation, and certain that we were  
 “now secure to Heaven and to her,  
 “behaved to us with additional tender-  
 “ness; whilst the nuns not only loved,  
 “but respected us as examples of early  
 “piety; but this calm was of short con-  
 “tinuance; six months after our taking  
 “the veil, my beloved sister, my darling  
 “Cecilia, was torn from me by a malig-  
 “nant fever. What I suffered at this  
 “dreadful separation can be more easily  
 “imagined than described; for several  
 “days

days my own life and reason were de-  
spaired of, and it was many weeks  
before I was capable of receiving con-  
solation from the kindness of my  
friends, or even from the sacred ex-  
ercises of Religion. Time at length  
produced its usual effect, and I began,  
though slowly, to resume my usual  
duties and amusements. The first real  
symptom I gave of returning cheer-  
fulness, was by attaching myself to  
Miss Conway, an English boarder,  
whose disposition was uncommonly  
volatile and lively; but though I was  
often amused by her brilliant and  
lively fallies; the charm which prin-  
cipally engaged my affection, was  
her having been a particular favorite  
of my sister's. We became insepa-  
rable, and I found in her conversation  
a constant relief from the melancholy  
which oppressed me. As Miss Con-



' way had been recommended by many  
 ' families of the first distinction, she  
 ' saw a great deal of company; the rules  
 ' of our convent are not in themselves  
 ' very rigid, and the Abbess, anxious  
 ' to promote every thing which might  
 ' contribute to dissipate my thoughts,  
 ' always permitted me to attend her to  
 ' the grate. Alas! how little did I de-  
 ' serve, and how ungratefully repay her  
 ' indulgence. This intercourse with the  
 ' world, to which I had never been  
 ' before accustomed, and the conversa-  
 ' tion of Alicia, inspired me with new  
 ' ideas; I grew fond of society, and  
 ' sometimes thought my father might  
 ' be mistaken, when he declared no  
 ' woman could be safe or happy but in  
 ' the walls of a convent. My mind  
 ' was in this state, when a brother of  
 ' Miss Conway's arrived at Florence,  
 ' accompanied by a young nobleman,  
 ' whom

‘ whom he introduced to her as his  
‘ particular friend. Lord Henry, for  
‘ that was the name of our new ac-  
‘ quaintance, soon became a constant  
‘ visitor, and often came even when  
‘ Mr. Conway was otherwise engaged.  
‘ For some time I placed this assiduity  
‘ to the account of Alicia, but his at-  
‘ tention to me at length grew so  
‘ marked, that it was impossible to  
‘ mistake it. Miss Conway, instead of  
‘ appearing piqued at this preference,  
‘ seemed pleased at it, and often rallied  
‘ me on the important conquest I had  
‘ made; which I affected to disbelieve,  
‘ merely for the pleasure of hearing the  
‘ arguments she brought in support  
‘ of her opinion. Charmed by Lord  
‘ Henry’s person and manner, flattered  
‘ by his attention, and finding his so-  
‘ ciety filled up the painful void my  
‘ sister’s death still left in my heart, I

' gave myself up to the pleasure of  
 ' loving him, without considering the  
 ' lengths to which this unwarrantable  
 ' passion would impel me. Reflection  
 ' indeed would sometimes tell me, I was  
 ' guilty of a crime, but Miss Conway  
 ' never failed, either to laugh, or reason  
 ' me out of these scruples; and, certain  
 ' of this, I never failed to inform her  
 ' of them the moment they arose; when  
 ' we were alone, she continually painted  
 ' the pleasures of the world, and the  
 ' happiness arising from a mutual at-  
 ' tachment in the most bewitching co-  
 ' lours, and at last went so far as to tell  
 ' me I ought not to suffer the vow I  
 ' had been rashly and inadvertently  
 ' prevailed on to take, to impede me  
 ' from accepting the blessings love and  
 ' liberty now offered to me. I was at  
 ' first startled at her avowal of these  
 ' sentiments, but from hearing them  
 ' often



“ often repeated, began insensibly to  
 “ adopt them. Lord Henry, in the  
 “ mean time availed himself of my too  
 “ visible partiality, and at the end of six  
 “ months yielding to my own wishes, and  
 “ the solicitations of my lover and friend,  
 “ I promised to elope with him, if he  
 “ could form any plan of taking me  
 “ from the convent without hazard to  
 “ himself. Transported by this com-  
 “ pliance, and aided by the advice of  
 “ Mr. Conway, he proposed a scheme  
 “ which wore every appearance of suc-  
 “ cess; as soon as I had escaped we were  
 “ to proceed to Leghorn, where a vessel  
 “ was engaged to carry us immediately  
 “ to England. — How can I sufficiently  
 “ thank that Providence, which by an  
 “ almost visible interposition, prefer-  
 “ ved me from the guilt and misery this  
 “ rash step must have entailed upon my  
 “ future life. . . From the time I gave

' this inconsiderate promise, my mind  
 ' became a prey to the most violent agi-  
 ' tation: Lord Henry and Alicia en-  
 ' deavoured in vain to compose me; I  
 ' felt that I was acting wrong, without  
 ' the power of retreating; every instance  
 ' of kindness I received from the Ab-  
 ' bess, planted a dagger in my heart,  
 ' and my imagination was wrought to  
 ' such an height, that I frequently  
 ' thought I heard the voice of Cecilia,  
 ' reproaching me for the perjury with  
 ' which I was going to load my con-  
 ' science: yet, infatuated by my passion,  
 ' and unable to give up the prospect of  
 ' being united for ever to the man on  
 ' whom my future happiness depended,  
 ' I would, if possible, have stifled the  
 ' suggestions of conscience, and per-  
 ' suaded myself the terrors I suffered,  
 ' were only the effects of weakened  
 ' spirits, and a disturbed mind. But,  
 ' happily

' happily for me, my constitution was  
 ' unequal to this painful struggle be-  
 ' tween duty and inclination, and I  
 ' shall ever acknowledge the goodness  
 ' of that Being, who thus preserved me  
 ' from the danger of hazarding my sal-  
 ' vation in more respects than one, for  
 ' had there been no other objection to  
 ' my marrying Lord Henry, surely the  
 ' difference of our faith ought to have  
 ' deterred me from such a connection,  
 ' knowing, as I did, the extent of his  
 ' influence over me, and the probability  
 ' there was of his exerting that influence  
 ' in religious points, when we were  
 ' indissolubly united.

' The morning preceding that on  
 ' which my escape was to be effected,  
 ' I awoke from an unquiet and terrified  
 ' slumber, with every symptom of a  
 ' violent fever. I, however, arose, and



• went to the chapel, though too much  
 • indisposed both in body and mind,  
 • to join in the sacred office: several  
 • of the Nuns observed the paleness  
 • and languor of my countenance; but,  
 • evading their enquiries, and com-  
 • plaining only of a slight head-ach, I  
 • returned to my cell, and determined  
 • to continue there on that pretence  
 • the remainder of the day, that I might  
 • be spared the misery of encounter-  
 • ing the eyes of the Abbess, whose  
 • penetration I dreaded, and whose  
 • kindness I could not bear. The con-  
 • flict in my mind now became insup-  
 • portable; I neither dared fix my  
 • mind for a moment on the past, the  
 • present, or the future, nor implore  
 • protection of the Power whose laws  
 • I was deliberately about to violate;  
 • yet, still endeavouring to harden my  
 • heart, I arose from the bed on which I  
 • had

' had thrown myself, determined to find  
 ' some method of amusing my imagi-  
 ' nation, and relieving it from the  
 ' gloomy ideas which filled it. In  
 ' compliance with my earnest wish, my  
 ' father had, when a child, allowed me  
 ' to learn English, and since Miss  
 ' Conway's arrival at the Convent, I  
 ' had improved myself so much, that  
 ' I was not only able to speak it  
 ' with fluency, but to read and un-  
 ' derstand the best authors in that  
 ' language. Among these your charm-  
 ' ing Richardson was one of my first  
 ' favourites. I took a volume of his  
 ' Sir Charles Grandison from my ca-  
 ' binet, and opened it, I can scarcely  
 ' think accidentally, at the place where  
 ' Clementina refuses the man, on whom,  
 ' to speak in her own words, her soul  
 ' doated. I read over the paper several  
 ' times with particular attention; the  
 ' reasons

' reasons she gives for her determina-  
 ' tion, and the contrast between us,  
 ' struck me so forcibly, I burst into  
 ' tears. I was in this situation when  
 ' Alicia entered the cell with a letter in  
 ' her hand; she seemed surprized at  
 ' the disorder I was in, which I ex-  
 ' plained, by telling her it was in vain  
 ' to struggle any longer against con-  
 ' viction; that I could not think of  
 ' fulfilling my engagement with Lord  
 ' Henry, adding, that if she valued  
 ' my present or future peace, she would  
 ' not urge me again on the subject,  
 ' but rather take on herself the friendly  
 ' office of breaking to him my resolu-  
 ' tion, and begging him to submit to  
 ' it. You are, replied she, with vi-  
 ' sible dissatisfaction, certainly to act  
 ' as you please, and you must be sen-  
 ' sible that I can have no view or in-  
 ' terest in this affair, but that of con-  
 ' tributing



tributing to the happiness of two  
persons whom I greatly esteem. If  
you have that friendship for me, or  
that love for Lord Henry you have  
so often avowed, how will you bear  
to be deprived of us both; and this  
must be the consequence of your ad-  
hering to this strange caprice: he  
will certainly quit Florence when he  
finds himself disappointed in the  
hope on which his existence appears  
to depend, and you know that in less  
than six weeks, I am to accompany  
my brother back to England: in-  
stead of being blest with love, friend-  
ship, splendor, freedom, and every  
happiness this world can give, you  
must drag the remainder of your  
days in a gloomy solitude, torment-  
ed by reflection, and vainly wishing  
you had attended to the voice of  
reason, instead of listening to the  
dictates

' dictates of folly and superstition.  
 ' As to Lord Henry, considering the  
 ' violence of his passion, and the na-  
 ' tural warmth of his disposition, raised  
 ' as he is to the highest pitch of  
 ' extacy, by the hopes you have given  
 ' him, I almost doubt whether he will  
 ' survive the cruel change; but, at  
 ' all events, you must write to or see  
 ' him yourself, for I cannot bear to  
 ' witness despair it is not in my power  
 ' to relieve. She then re-urged all  
 ' those arguments by which my mind  
 ' had been before perverted, and, suc-  
 ' ceeding but too well, I promised  
 ' implicitly to follow her advice,  
 ' and resume my former intention..  
 ' She then told me Lord Henry  
 ' had been at the grate, but that ob-  
 ' serving the disorder of my coun-  
 ' tenance, whilst we were at prayers,  
 ' and fearful that my dejection or his  
 ' transports,

“ transports, might lead to a discovery,  
“ if any of the nuns should come in-  
“ to the parlour, she had prevented  
“ him from seeing me. This letter,  
“ said she, will convince you how de-  
“ serving, how sensible he is of the  
“ happiness you would have deprived  
“ him of. I took it with a trembling  
“ hand, and found it contained the  
“ liveliest expressions of gratitude, and  
“ the most solemn assurances, that his  
“ future life should be devoted to me,  
“ and that he would never, by any  
“ method, seek to draw me from a  
“ religion, which, since I professed, he  
“ could hardly call an erroneous one.  
“ This letter completed Alicia’s vic-  
“ tory, and I began to hope, that, in-  
“ stead of being myself perverted, I  
“ might be the means of winning Lord  
“ Henry over to the true faith. Vain  
“ and presumptuous wretch that I was!  
“ alas!



‘ alas! of what self-delusion is that  
‘ heart capable, which, against convic-  
‘ tion, determines to indulge its own  
‘ inclinations. Miss Conway, believing  
‘ the illness I complained of was en-  
‘ tirely owing to the agitation of my  
‘ mind, persuaded me to lie down,  
‘ and endeavour to obtain some re-  
‘ pose. I tried to obey her injunc-  
‘ tions, but found it impossible; my  
‘ indisposition increased every moment,  
‘ and, in a few hours, I was, to all  
‘ appearance, seized with the same fe-  
‘ ver, which, a twelvemonth before,  
‘ had been fatal to my beloved sister.  
‘ Sensible of this, and giving myself  
‘ up for lost, I saw my conduct in  
‘ that true light, in which the ap-  
‘ proach of death never fails to place  
‘ those actions we in full health gloss  
‘ over with a thousand false pretences:  
‘ tormented by remorse, dreading to  
‘ leave

‘ leave the world without receiving  
‘ absolution for my intentional crime,  
‘ yet not knowing to what punish-  
‘ ment the confession I wished to  
‘ make might expose my lover and  
‘ friend, I was unable to support such  
‘ complicated misery; my weakened  
‘ mind suddenly gave way, and I was  
‘ for several days in a state of absolute  
‘ frenzy, which, as I was afterwards  
‘ informed, was succeeded by a long  
‘ and death-like sleep. When I awoke  
‘ from this stupor, the first object that  
‘ struck my sight was the amiable  
‘ Abbess kneeling by my bed-side,  
‘ and tenderly weeping over me; my  
‘ memory suddenly recurring to the  
‘ crime I had been guilty of, I begged  
‘ her in a low and tremulous voice,  
‘ not to waste her tears on a wretch  
‘ undeserving her compassion. My  
‘ dear child, replied she, do not give  
‘ way

“ way to despair, Heaven never rejects:  
“ the truly penitent, and surely weak  
“ and sinful creatures, as we all are,  
“ we ought to endeavour humbly to  
“ imitate that God, whose darling at-  
“ tribute is mercy, and to obey the  
“ command which enjoined us to for-  
“ give one another. From my heart I  
“ forgive you, my poor deluded Ade-  
“ laide, but it is upon condition that  
“ you speak no more at present on this  
“ subject, and try by every means to  
“ recover your health, which may en-  
“ able you in future to evince the  
“ sincerity of your repentance. I  
“ kissed her hand in token of acqui-  
“ escence, and, my heart thus relieved  
“ from an intolerable load, I grew  
“ considerably better, yet still appre-  
“ hensive of a relapse, I begged in the  
“ evening to see Father Ludovico, the  
“ Director of the convent. To him,  
“ in,



“ in the presence of the Abbess, I made  
 “ a full confession of my past errors,  
 “ softening, as much as I could, consist-  
 “ ently with truth, the active part Alicia  
 “ had taken in the affair. The good  
 “ Father, satisfied with my sincerity,  
 “ gave me full absolution, only en-  
 “ joining me a slight penance when I  
 “ was restored to health; but at the  
 “ same time he warned me never again  
 “ to indulge a passion, to which my  
 “ peace and salvation would have been  
 “ sacrificed, but for the visible inter-  
 “ position of Providence, and com-  
 “ manded me, upon pain of eternal  
 “ punishment, not to see Lord Henry  
 “ or Miss Conway again, nor to re-  
 “ ceive the letters they might find  
 “ some means of conveying to me.  
 “ This I solemnly promised, and se-  
 “ cretly rejoiced at the intelligence  
 “ which the good Father had unin-  
 “ tentionally

' tentionally given me, of their being  
 ' safe and unpunished. In a few days  
 ' I was entirely out of danger, and  
 ' the benevolent Abbess, to satisfy the  
 ' curiosity she knew I must feel, but  
 ' dared not express, related to me all  
 ' that had happened during the first  
 ' part of my illness. Though, said she,  
 ' I had not the slightest suspicion of the  
 ' cause, I observed for several weeks  
 ' before you were taken ill, an altera-  
 ' tion in your manner and behavior,  
 ' for which I could not account, but  
 ' attributing it to the melancholy which  
 ' at intervals, had hung upon you ever  
 ' since the death of your sister, or to  
 ' the idea that you would soon be se-  
 ' parated from Miss Conway, I thought  
 ' it best to let it pass unnoticed; yet,  
 ' finding that your dejection rather in-  
 ' creased than diminished, I determined to  
 ' speak to you upon it the very day you  
 ' were

‘ were taken ill; but the instant you  
‘ were seized with the delirium, I could  
‘ too well account for that conduct  
‘ which had surprized me. You raved  
‘ incessantly of Lord Henry and Miss  
‘ Conway, sometimes talked of England,  
‘ and at others, unconscious that I was  
‘ present, lamented the ingratitude with  
‘ which you had repaid my tenderness,  
‘ and prayed with the utmost fervency  
‘ for my happiness, and the prosperity  
‘ of the convent, to which, you said,  
‘ you must never again return. Alarm-  
‘ ed by this, which I plainly saw was  
‘ more than the effects of mere frenzy,  
‘ I went to my own apartment, and  
‘ sending for Miss Conway, charg-  
‘ ed her with being accessory to your  
‘ intended elopement, at the same time  
‘ promising not to expose her to pu-  
‘ nishment, if she would relate to me  
‘ all the particulars of the affair. The  
‘ sud-



\* suddenness of my accusation threw her  
 \* off her guard, and rendered it im-  
 \* possible for her to disguise the truth;  
 \* she instantly fell on her knees, and  
 \* made a confession, which in some mea-  
 \* sure exculpated you, whilst it loaded  
 \* her with a double weight of guilt;  
 \* yet she endeavored to palliate the part  
 \* she had taken, by attributing it to  
 \* an attachment, which made it im-  
 \* possible for her to bear the thoughts  
 \* of parting with you for ever. I told  
 \* her that greatly as I detested her  
 \* conduct, she might be assured I would  
 \* adhere to the promise I had given;  
 \* but as I could not allow her to re-  
 \* main in the convent another night, I  
 \* desired she would write to her brother,  
 \* and request him to take her under  
 \* his immediate protection, and that I  
 \* hoped to see him for that purpose the  
 \* following day. He did not, however,  
 \* choose

“ choose to obey my summons, deterred,  
 “ I imagine, by the intelligence his  
 “ sister communicated to him, but sent  
 “ his carriage and servants for her  
 “ early in the morning, excusing his  
 “ own absence on pretence of indispo-  
 “ sition.

“ Before Miss Conway went, I used  
 “ many arguments to make her sensible  
 “ of the atrocious crime she had been  
 “ guilty of, and she left me with every  
 “ appearance of remorse, and earnestly  
 “ praying for your recovery and future  
 “ peace. I afterwards learned Mr. and  
 “ Miss Conway set out immediately on  
 “ their return to England, accompanied  
 “ by Lord Henry; but I have since  
 “ been informed by private intelligence,  
 “ that he came to Florence the same  
 “ night, and now lies concealed at the  
 “ house of one of his friends; and I  
 “ have

' have no doubt that as soon as you  
 ' are recovered, he will endeavor to  
 ' see or write to you. I begged she  
 ' would not make herself uneasy on  
 ' this account, as I was determined no  
 ' persuasions should ever again tempt  
 ' me to swerve from the path of duty,  
 ' solemnly repeating the vow I had  
 ' before made to Father Lodovico. I  
 ' then requested to know whether the  
 ' rash and criminal step I was on the  
 ' point of taking, was generally known.  
 ' She assured me it was not, that the  
 ' sudden removal of Miss Conway was  
 ' supposed to be owing to her brother's  
 ' caprice, and the disturbance of my  
 ' mind entirely attributed to the vio-  
 ' lence of my fever; and the better to  
 ' guard against discovery, I never, ad-  
 ' ded she, suffered those nuns, of whose  
 ' penetration I had the highest idea, to  
 ' come into your room during the  
 ' height



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height of your delirium. I expressed the liveliest gratitude for this kind attention, and said it should be the study of my future life to deserve the indulgence she had ever shewn me, and to efface from her mind all memory of the past transaction. The predictions of the Abbess were soon verified, and my fortitude and sincerity put to the severest trial, by the behavior of Lord Henry. Regardless of danger, he came to the convent almost every day in a different disguise, in hopes of surprizing me into an interview; but finding I never appeared at the grate, he took the strange and unprecedented resolution of writing to the Abbess, begging she would permit him to see me, if only for five minutes, in her presence, promising if she complied, to resign himself to his fate, and return

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‘ immediately to England. This best  
‘ of women, who possesses at once all  
‘ the benevolence and all the purity  
‘ of a guardian Angel, instead of being  
‘ offended at his rashness, pitied the  
‘ sufferings she could not relieve, and  
‘ even lamented the impossibility of in-  
‘ dulging him in a point in which his  
‘ heart was interested. The answer  
‘ she returned evinced the compassion  
‘ with which her heart was inspired; she  
‘ conjured him in the tenderest manner,  
‘ to give up a pursuit which could only  
‘ be attended by misery to himself, and  
‘ distress to me, and not to persecute  
‘ any farther a young creature, whose  
‘ peace and reputation would be de-  
‘ stroyed by his rash and ungovernable  
‘ passion; to this, at her desire, I sub-  
‘ joined a postscript, solemnly assuring  
‘ him we must never more meet in  
‘ this world, yet softening a sentence  
‘ which

‘ which I knew he would call cruel,  
‘ by expressing the most earnest wishes  
‘ for his future happiness. From that  
‘ time to the present, I have never  
‘ heard or mentioned his name, nor  
‘ should, perhaps, have done it now,  
‘ but for one reason; I have a minia-  
‘ ture of this too amiable man, which,  
‘ after our final separation, was the  
‘ constant companion of my solitary  
‘ hours. I frequently contemplated it  
‘ with real, and I then thought, inno-  
‘ cent pleasure, but at length convinced,  
‘ that even this indulgence was im-  
‘ proper, and that it contributed to  
‘ keep alive a passion, which I ought  
‘ to renounce, I three years ago deter-  
‘ mined never to behold it again, but  
‘ to present it to the first English lady  
‘ who appeared worthy such a distinc-  
‘ tion. Will you, Miss Evelyn, by  
‘ accepting it, relieve me from the



‘ temptation of breaking a resolution,  
 ‘ which I know you must approve?  
 ‘ After a moment’s pause, I consented;  
 ‘ pleased with my compliance, she left  
 ‘ the parlor, and almost instantly re-  
 ‘ turned with the picture. Take this,  
 ‘ said she, putting it into my hand;  
 ‘ when you are far distant from Italy,  
 ‘ let it sometimes remind you of the  
 ‘ unhappy Adelaide, and may it be a  
 ‘ talisman to guard your heart from  
 ‘ that bewitching and destructive passion,  
 ‘ to which so many of our sex sacri-  
 ‘ fice their happiness. The instant I  
 ‘ fixed my eyes upon the picture, I  
 ‘ exclaimed, in an accent, Though you  
 ‘ never mentioned the family name of  
 ‘ your lover, I am sure it must be  
 ‘ Montague. You know him then,  
 ‘ replied she. I answered I did not, but  
 ‘ that the striking resemblance the mi-  
 ‘ niature bore to his brother, with whom  
 ‘ I had

" I had once been well acquainted, made,  
 " it impossible for me to be mistaken.  
 " Oh, Miss Evelyn, replied she, if you  
 " have the slightest connection with any  
 " one of the Montague family, you can  
 " certainly give me the intelligence my  
 " heart has long panted for. Tell me,  
 " tell me truly, is Lord Henry living,  
 " is he married? There was no eva-  
 " ding these questions, though I dread-  
 " ed the effect my answer to the last  
 " of them would produce; but my  
 " suspicions were changed into admira-  
 " tion, when my assuring her, in reply  
 " to her farther enquiries, that I had  
 " been informed, the woman Lord  
 " Henry had chosen, was in every re-  
 " spect worthy the happiness of being  
 " united to him, she fell on her knees,  
 " and clasping her hands together in an  
 " extacy of joy, returned thanks to  
 " Heaven for the relief this informa-  
 " tion.

' tion had given her; then rising, and  
 ' addressing herself to me, Believe me,  
 ' Miss Evelyn, the dejection you have  
 ' so often witnessed, has not been ow-  
 ' ing to the real or fancied impossi-  
 ' bility of overcoming a passion, which  
 ' in my circumstances it was highly  
 ' criminal to indulge; and tenderly as  
 ' I once loved Lord Henry, a sense  
 ' of duty, and the resolution which a  
 ' few months after he ceased his soli-  
 ' citations, I formed, of never again  
 ' beholding that picture, and destroy-  
 ' ing every memorial which might re-  
 ' call his idea, would, by degrees, have  
 ' restored me to tranquillity, could I  
 ' have divested myself of the appre-  
 ' hension that his life, or at least the  
 ' happiness of it, was fallen a sacrifice  
 ' to an unfortunate attachment, an at-  
 ' tachment which I knew I might have  
 ' suppressed in its infancy, had I then  
 ' acted



acted with the propriety which became my situation, rank, and character; but the hint Miss Conway once gave me was never absent from my memory; and my imagination continually represented him to me deprived of life by his own hand, or dragging on a wretched existence, a prey to grief and disappointment; and these sad reflections, by intruding themselves with redoubled force, whenever I was engaged in the more solemn duties of religion, almost reduced me to despair. Your intelligence, on which I know I may depend, has dissipated this gloom. I have now nothing to do but to make my peace with Heaven, and shall devote myself entirely to its service, without one uneasy thought, except what arises from the recollection of my own unworthiness; and in those

' petitions, which for the future I hope  
 ' I shall be enabled to offer to the  
 ' Throne of Grace, undisturbed by  
 ' worldly cares or anxieties, I will never  
 ' forget to pray for your peace and  
 ' happiness, both in this world and the  
 ' next.'

The unaffected pleasure which, whilst  
 she was speaking, gave new lustre to  
 her eyes, and animated her whole form,  
 convinced me her lips and heart were  
 in unison, and I felt the sincerest satis-  
 faction at the event of a conversation,  
 which I feared would have terminated  
 very differently. We were now inter-  
 rupted by the entrance of company,  
 and I took my leave, after I had, in  
 English, asked her permission to relate  
 what had passed to Lady Willoughby,  
 who, I told her, was connected by mar-  
 riage with the Montague family; she  
 gave

gave it without the least reluctance, and said, that though it was of the utmost consequence to her, that the affair should not be known in Florence, she had no objection to my mentioning it to any of my friends in England, on whose secrecy I could depend. Lady Willoughby was both charmed and affected with the history of the fair nun, and has since frequently accompanied me to the convent, which I visit with additional pleasure, from observing that Adelaide appears more cheerful every time I see her. We never, even when alone, speak of Lord Henry, but she enters on other subjects with ease, and even vivacity. The abbess, who, exclusive of her general benevolence, certainly loves her with maternal affection, complimented me yesterday on being instrumental to this change, and concluded by saying, that had her poor  
Adelaide



Adelaide met with a friend like me, instead of the artful and imprudent Miss Conway, she would not have wasted four years of life in unavailing despondence.

I have this instant received two letters from England, the first from Miss Herbert, who informs me Mr. Evelyn is at present safe at North Hill, from whence he does not express any intention of removing, and that Maria has just presented him with a son. I earnestly hope this event, about which I know he was very solicitous, will induce him to shew his gratitude to Heaven, by setting a higher value than he has yet done, on the many domestic blessings that is bestowed upon him. The other from Lady Harrington, gave me particular pleasure, as you are almost its only subject; she speaks of you in the highest terms,

terms, and appears so truly sensible of your merit, that you must forgive her for revealing a secret you did not intend I should be acquainted with. You will guess to what I allude, and believe me, my beloved friend, my heart overflows with gratitude at this tender, this delicate proof of your friendship. Lady Harrington tells me Annette was unwilling to receive so considerable a present, and that she herself was averse to it, but adds you are too charming, too irresistible, not to carry every point you really wish to obtain. I implicitly subscribe to this opinion, and can truly say, that exclusive of your friendship to me, your conduct, particularly during the last twelvemonth, has been such, in a variety of trying instances, that my affection for you is almost raised to a pitch of enthusiasm, and I consider it not only as one of the first blessings,  
but

204 RAYNSFORD PARK.

but one of the first distinctions of my  
life, that I am permitted to subscribe  
myself

Your ever grateful and devoted

HARRIET EVELYN.

LETTER



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LETTER XLIX.

TO LORD WILLIAM MONTAGUE.

Hot Wells, June 26.

**P**REPARED as you were by my last melancholy letter, the black seal affixed to this, will, before you open it, inform you, that my gentle, my amiable Louisa is no more. After a painful illness, which she bore with heroic, or to speak more properly, Christian fortitude, she expired yesterday morning in my arms, imploring a thousand blessings on my head,

head, and assuring me, with her last breath, that she saw no terrors in death, except what arose from its separating her from me. You, Montague, are too well acquainted with my heart, to doubt the sincerity of my grief, which at this moment would admit of no alleviation, was it not for the consciousness, that from the time I knew she regarded me with a tender preference, to that which terminated her existence, I never voluntarily gave her the slightest uneasiness; but in this I had no merit; for I must have been a wretch indeed, could I have repaid the tenderness of a lovely young woman with unkindness or neglect. Her attachment to me was so pure and disinterested, that I am convinced the least idea of having interfered with my happiness, would have rendered her the most wretched of human beings; but the constant guard I kept over my looks  
and

and actions prevented this thought from ever entering into her mind. Many things she said to me during her last illness, confirms me in this opinion, and I would not now exchange it for any blessing fortune, or even love could bestow. I anticipate the request I know your friendship will induce you to make, but I cannot comply with it; my heart, Montague, exhausted by a variety of conflicting passions, and depressed by the distressful emotions it has lately undergone, is incapable of tasting even the blessing of your society: in the bosom of solitude it may recover its proper tone: when I have paid the last duties to Louisa, I shall return to the Cottage, and there, as soon as I have recovered some degree of manly fortitude, at leisure fix on a plan for my future life. My deliberation will probably terminate in a voyage to India; Ellinor has lately informed



informed me our uncle is still at Bengal; perhaps he may receive the only son of his brother with kindness, and forget the displeasure he had conceived at my refusing his former offer; if not, Sir William's noble legacy will enable me to enter with credit into some commercial line; for I am determined not to pursue the military one in that country. The objections I once had to this scheme are now obviated; my principles are, I flatter myself too well fixed, to be undermined by pecuniary considerations; I have now no fond mother to regret my absence, or torment herself with fears for my safety; you and my fair cousin are perhaps the only beings to whom my resolution will cause the slightest pain. I will, if possible, see you both, before I leave England, and if at this period, I may confess such a wish without a crime, I will own it would  
give

give me the sincerest satisfaction, to take a last leave of Miss Raynsford; but my letter to her father the day preceding my marriage, makes this impracticable; honor, delicacy, and propriety all conspire to forbid it. Selfishly engrossed by my own feelings, I almost forgot to mention a circumstance that may be of the utmost consequence to yours; whatever were Mr. Evelyn's motives for impressing your mind with a belief, that his lovely cousin was engaged, it is entirely without foundation, her heart and hand are absolutely free. I was assured of this, by those lips which never uttered a falsehood. As I know not the present situation of your heart, I did not give my reasons for making the enquiry, but you may depend on the truth of my intelligence; the relation of the strange accident which gave me the opportunity of obtaining

210 RAYNSFORD PARK.

it, may at some future time interest you and amuse me; all I can now add, is, that I am ever, most affectionately

Yours,

AUGUSTUS HAMILTON.

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I have concluded my letter, without telling you Miss Evelyn has been for many months with Lord and Lady Willoughby; and that she accompanied them to Florence, where they are now, and intend remaining the winter.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.